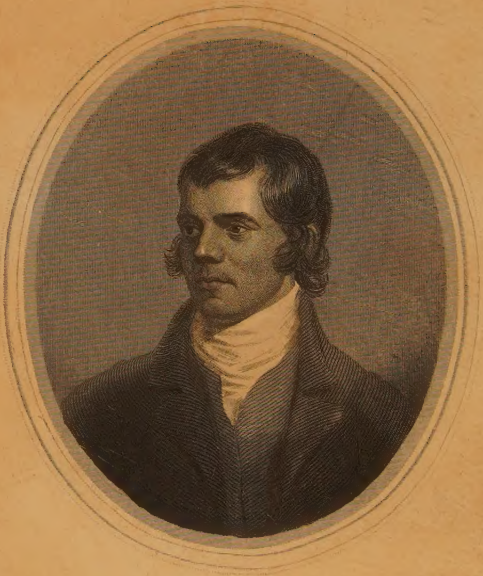
From Sister Alice

Dec. 25th 1864



Robert Burns – Poet

THE

POETICAL WORKS

OF

ROBERT BURNS.

WITH A MEMOIR.

VOL. I.

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OF

THE FIRST VOLUME.

*** Italic letters indicate the publication devoted to his writings, in which, as far as ascertained, the various compositions of Burns were first included. The poems and songs marked *a* composed the first edition, published at Kilmarnock in 1786; those marked *b* were added in the second edition, published at Edinburgh in 1787; those marked *c* were added in the edition of 1793. These, with certain pieces which appeared in the early volumes of Johnson's *Scots Musical Museum*, and Thomson's *Select Melodies of Scotland*, were all that Burns himself committed to print; the rest, as well as his letters, have been published since his death. In this list of contents, the pieces published in Johnson's Museum are marked *d;* the poems presented in Currie's first edition of the poet's works in 1800 are marked *e;* those added in the second edition, *f;* those published by Stewart of Glasgow in 1801, *g;* those in Cromek's Reliques of Burns, 1808, *h;* those in Lockhart's Life of Burns, *i;* those in Cunningham's edition, 1834, *j;* those in Hogg and Motherwell's edition, 1834–36, *k;* those in the People's Edition of Messrs. Chambers, 1838–41, *l;* those in Blackie's edition, 1846, *m;* those added in the present work, *n:* an asterisk being given in certain cases where it is ascertained that the poem was previously sent forth fugitively.

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MEMOIR

OF THE

LIFE OF ROBERT BURNS.

ROBERT BURNS, the national bard of Scotland, was born on the 25th of January, 1759, in a clay-built cottage about two miles south of the town of Ayr. He was the eldest son of William Burnes, or Burness, who at the period of Robert's birth was gardener and overseer to a gentleman of small estate; but resided on a few acres of land which he had on lease from another person. The father was a man of strict religious principles, and also distinguished for that penetration and knowledge of mankind which was afterwards so conspicuous in his son. The mother of the poet was likewise a very sagacious woman, and possessed an inexhaustible store of ballads and legendary tales, with which she nourished the infant imagination of him whose own productions were destined to excel them all.

These worthy persons labored diligently for the support of an increasing family; nor, in the midst of harassing struggles, did they neglect the mental improvement of their offspring; a characteristic of Scottish parents, even under the most depress-

ing circumstances. In his sixth year Robert was put under the tuition of one Campbell, and subsequently under Mr. John Murdoch, a very faithful and painstaking teacher. With Mr. Murdoch he remained for a few years, and was accurately instructed in the first principles of composition. The poet and his brother Gilbert were the aptest pupils in the school, and were generally at the head of the class. Mr. Murdoch, in afterwards recording the impressions which the two brothers made on him, says, "Gilbert always appeared to me to possess a more lively imagination, and to be more of the wit, than Robert. I attempted to teach them a little church-music. Here they were left far behind by all the rest of the school. Robert's ear in particular was remarkably dull, and his voice untunable. It was long before I could get them to distinguish one tune from another. Robert's countenance was generally grave, and expressive of a serious, contemplative, and thoughtful mind. Gilbert's face said, *Mirth, with thee I mean to live;* and certainly, if any person who knew the two boys had been asked which of them was the most likely to court the muses, he would never have guessed that *Robert* had a propensity of that kind."

Besides the tuition of Mr. Murdoch, Burns received instructions from his father in writing and arithmetic. Under their joint care he made rapid progress, and was remarkable for the ease with which he committed devotional poetry to memory. The following extract from his letter to Dr. Moore in 1787 is interesting, from the light which it

throws upon his progress as a scholar, and on the formation of his character as a poet: — "At those years," says he, "I was by no means a favourite with anybody. I was a good deal noted for a retentive memory, a stubborn sturdy something in my disposition, and an enthusiastic idiot piety. I say *idiot* piety, because I was then but a child. Though it cost the schoolmaster some thrashings, I made an excellent scholar; and by the time I was ten or eleven years of age, I was a critic in substantives, verbs, and particles. In my infant and boyish days, too, I owed much to an old woman who resided in the family, remarkable for her ignorance, credulity, and superstition. She had, I suppose, the largest collection in the country, of tales and songs concerning devils, ghosts, fairies, brownies, witches, warlocks, spunkies, kelpies, elf-candles, dead-lights, wraiths, apparitions, cantrips, giants, enchanted towers, dragons, and other trumpery. This cultivated the latent seeds of poetry; but had so strong an effect on my imagination, that to this hour, in my nocturnal rambles, I sometimes keep a sharp lookout in suspicious places; and though nobody can be more sceptical than I am in such matters, yet it often takes an effort of philosophy to shake off these idle terrors. The earliest composition that I recollect taking pleasure in was *The Vision of Mirza*, and a hymn of Addison's, beginning, *How are thy servants blest, O Lord!* I particularly remember one half-stanza, which was music to my boyish ear —

> For though on dreadful whirls we hung
> High on the broken wave. —

I met with these pieces in *Mason's English Collection*, one of my school-books. The first two books I ever read in private, and which gave me more pleasure than any two books I ever read since, were, *The Life of Hannibal*, and *The History of Sir William Wallace*. Hannibal gave my young ideas such a turn, that I used to strut in raptures up and down after the recruiting drum and bagpipe, and wish myself tall enough to be a soldier; while the story of Wallace poured a tide of Scottish prejudice into my veins, which will boil along there till the flood-gates of life shut in eternal rest."

Mr. Murdoch's removal from Mount Oliphant deprived Burns of his instructions; but they were still continued by the father of the bard. About the age of fourteen he was sent to school every alternate week for the improvement of his writing. In the meanwhile he was busily employed upon the operations of the farm; and, at the age of fifteen, was considered as the principal laborer upon it. About a year after this he gained three weeks of respite, which he spent with his old tutor Murdoch at Ayr, in revising the English grammar, and in studying the French language, in which he made uncommon progress. Ere his sixteenth year elapsed, he had considerably extended his reading. The vicinity of Mount Oliphant to Ayr afforded him facilities for gratifying what had now become a passion. Among the books which he had perused were some plays of Shakspeare, Pope, the works of Allan Ramsay, and a collection of songs which constituted his *vade-mecum*. "I pored

over them," says he, "driving my cart or walking to labour, song by song, verse by verse, carefully noticing the true tender or sublime from affectation and fustian." So early did he evince his attachment to the lyric muse, in which he was destined to surpass all who have gone before or succeeded him.

At this period the family removed to Lochlea, in the parish of Torbolton. Some time before, however, he had made his first attempt in poetry. It was a song addressed to a rural beauty about his own age; and though possessing no great merits as a whole, it contains some lines and ideas which would have done honor to him at any age. After the removal to Lochlea his literary zeal slackened, for he was thus cut off from those acquaintances whose conversation stimulated his powers, and whose kindness supplied him with books. For about three years after this period he was busily employed upon the farm; but at intervals he paid his addresses to the poetic muse, and with no common success. The summer of his nineteenth year was spent in the study of mensuration, surveying, etc. at a small seaport town, a good distance from home. He returned to his father's considerably improved. "My reading," says he, "was enlarged with the very important addition of Thomson's and Shenstone's works. I had seen human nature in a new phasis; and I engaged several of my school-fellows to keep up a literary correspondence with me. This improved me in composition. I had met with a collection of letters by the wits of Queen

Anne's reign, and I pored over them most devoutly; I kept copies of any of my own letters that pleased me; and a comparison between them and the composition of most of my correspondents flattered my vanity. I carried this whim so far, that though I had not three farthings' worth of business in the world, yet almost every post brought me as many letters as if I had been a broad plodding son of daybook and ledger."

His mind, peculiarly susceptible of tender impressions, was continually the slave of some rustic charmer. In the "heat and whirlwind of his love," he generally found relief in poetry, by which, as by a safety-valve, his turbulent passions were allowed to have vent. He formed the resolution of entering the matrimonial state; but his circumscribed means of subsistence as a farmer preventing his taking that step, he resolved on becoming a flax-dresser, for which purpose he removed to the town of Irvine in 1781. The speculation turned out unsuccessful; for the shop catching fire, was burnt, and the poet returned to his father without a sixpence. During his stay at Irvine he had met with Ferguson's poems. This circumstance was of some importance to Burns, for it roused his poetic powers from the torpor into which they had fallen, and in a great measure finally determined the *Scottish* character of his poetry. He here also contracted some friendships, which he himself says did him mischief; and, by his brother Gilbert's account, from this date there was a serious change in his conduct. The venerable and excellent parent of the

poet died soon after his son's return. The support of the family now devolving upon Burns, in conjunction with his brother he took a sub-lease of the farm of Mossgiel, in the parish of Mauchline. The four years which he resided upon this farm were the most important of his life. It was here he felt that nature had designed him for a poet; and here, accordingly, his genius began to develop its energies in those strains which will make his name familiar to all future times, the admiration of every civilized country, and the glory and boast of his own.

The vigor of Burns's understanding, and the keenness of his wit, as displayed more particularly at Masonic meetings and debating clubs, of which he formed one at Mauchline, began to spread his fame as a man of uncommon endowments. He now could number as his acquaintance several clergymen, and also some gentlemen of substance; amongst whom was Mr. Gavin Hamilton, writer in Mauchline, one of his earliest patrons. One circumstance more than any other contributed to increase his notoriety. "Polemical divinity," says he to Dr. Moore in 1787, "about this time was putting the country half mad; and I, ambitious of shining in conversation-parties on Sundays, at funerals, etc., used to puzzle Calvinism with so much heat and indiscretion, that I raised a hue-and-cry of heresy against me, which has not ceased to this hour." The farm which he possessed belonged to the Earl of Loudon, but the brothers held it in sub-lease from Mr. Hamilton. This gentleman was at open feud with one

of the ministers of Mauchline, who was a rigid Calvinist. Mr. Hamilton maintained opposite tenets; and it is not matter of surprise that the young farmer should have espoused his cause, and brought all the resources of his genius to bear upon it. The result was *The Holy Fair*, *The Ordination*, *Holy Willie's Prayer*, and other satires, as much distinguished for their coarse severity and bitterness as for their genius.

The applause which greeted these pieces emboldened the poet, and encouraged him to proceed. In his *Life*, by his brother Gilbert, a very interesting account is given of the occasions which gave rise to the poems, and the chronological order in which they were produced. The exquisite pathos and humor, the strong manly sense, the masterly command of felicitous language, the graphic power of delineating scenery, manners, and incidents, which appear so conspicuously in his various poems, could not fail to call forth the admiration of those who were favored with a perusal of them. But the clouds of misfortune were gathering darkly above the head of him who was thus giving delight to a large and widening circle of friends. The farm of Mossgiel proved a losing concern; and an amour with Jane Armour, afterwards Mrs. Burns, had assumed so serious an aspect, that he at first resolved to fly from the scene of his disgrace and misery. One trait of his character, however, must be mentioned. Before taking any steps for his departure, he met Jane Armour by appointment, and gave into her hands a written acknowledgment of marriage, which, when pro-

duced by a person in her situation, is, according to the Scots law, to be accepted as legal evidence of an *irregular* marriage having really taken place. This Jane burned at the persuasion of her father, who was adverse to a marriage; and Burns, thus wounded in the two most powerful feelings of his mind, his love and pride, was driven almost to insanity. Jamaica was his destination; but as he did not possess the money necessary to defray the expense of his passage out, he resolved to publish some of his best poems, in order to raise the requisite sum. These views were warmly promoted by some of his more opulent friends; and a sufficiency of subscribers having been procured, one of the finest volumes of poetry that ever appeared in the world issued from the provincial press of Kilmarnock.

It is hardly possible to imagine with what eager admiration and delight they were everywhere received. They possessed in an eminent degree all those qualities which invariably contribute to render any literary work quickly and permanently popular. They were written in a phraseology of which all the powers were universally felt, and which, being at once antique, familiar, and now rarely written, was therefore fitted to serve all the dignified and picturesque uses of poetry, without making it unintelligible. The imagery and the sentiments were at once natural, impressive, and interesting. Those topics of satire and scandal in which the rustic delights; that humorous imitation of character, and that witty association of ideas familiar and striking, yet not

naturally allied to one another, which has force to shake his sides with laughter; those fancies of superstition, at which one still wonders and trembles; those affecting sentiments and images of true religion, which are at once dear and awful to the heart; were all represented by Burns with the magical power of true poetry. Old and young, high and low, grave and gay, learned and ignorant, all were alike surprised and transported.

In the mean time, a few copies of these fascinating poems found their way to Edinburgh, and having been read to Dr. Blacklock, obtained his warmest approbation; and he advised the author to repair to Edinburgh. Burns lost no time in complying with this request; and accordingly, towards the end of the year 1786, he set out for the capital, where he was received by Dr. Blacklock with the most flattering kindness, and introduced to every person of taste among that excellent man's friends. Multitudes now vied with each other in patronizing the rustic poet. Those who possessed at once true taste and ardent philanthropy were soon united in his praise; those who were disposed to favor any good thing belonging to Scotland, purely because it was Scottish, gladly joined the cry; while those who had hearts and understandings to be charmed without knowing why, when they saw their native customs, manners, and language made the subjects and the materials of poesy, could not suppress that impulse of feeling which struggled to declare itself in favor of Burns.

Thus did Burns, ere he had been many weeks in Edinburgh, find himself the object of universal curiosity, favor, admiration, and fondness. He was sought after, courted with attentions the most respectful and assiduous, feasted, flattered, caressed, and treated by all ranks as the great boast of his country, whom it was scarcely possible to honor and reward in a degree equal to his merits.

A new edition of his poems was called for; and the public mind was directed to the subject by Henry Mackenzie, who dedicated a paper in the *Lounger* to a commendatory notice of the poet. This circumstance will ever be remembered to the honor of that polished writer, not only for the warmth of the eulogy he bestowed, but because it was the first printed acknowledgment which had been made to the genius of Burns. The copyright was sold to Creech for £100; but the friends of the poet advised him to forward a subscription. The patronage of the Caledonian Hunt, a very influential body, was obtained. The list of subscribers rapidly rose to 1500; many gentlemen paying a great deal more than the price of the volume; and it was supposed that the poet derived from the subscription and the sale of his copyright a clear profit of at least £700.

The conversation of Burns, according to the testimony of all the eminent men who heard him, was even more wonderful than his poetry. He affected no soft air nor graceful motions of politeness, which might have ill accorded with the rustic plainness of his native manners. Conscious

superiority of mind taught him to associate with the great, the learned, and the gay, without being overawed into any such bashfulness as might have rendered him confused in thought or hesitating in elocution. He possessed withal an extraordinary share of plain common sense or mother-wit, which prevented him from obtruding upon persons, of whatever rank, with whom he was admitted to converse, any of those effusions of vanity, envy, or self-conceit, in which authors who have lived remote from the general practice of life, and whose minds have been almost exclusively confined to contemplate their own studies and their own works, are but too prone to indulge. In conversation he displayed a sort of intuitive quickness and rectitude of judgment upon every subject that arose. The sensibility of his heart, and the vivacity of his fancy, gave a rich coloring to whatever opinions he was disposed to advance; and his language was thus not less happy in conversation than in his writings. Hence those who had met and conversed with him once were pleased to meet and to converse with him again and again.

For some time he associated only with the virtuous, the learned, and the wise, and the purity of his morals remained uncontaminated. But unfortunately he fell, as others have fallen in similar circumstances. He suffered himself to be surrounded by persons who were proud to tell that they had been in company with Burns, and had seen Burns as loose and as foolish as themselves. He now also began to contract something of arro-

gance in conversation. Accustomed to be among his associates what is vulgarly but expressively called "the cock of the company," he could scarcely refrain from indulging in a similar freedom and dictatorial decision of talk, even in the presence of persons who could less patiently endure presumption.

After remaining some months in the Scottish metropolis, basking in the noontide sun of a popularity which, as Dugald Stewart well remarks, would have turned any head but his own, he formed a resolution of returning to the shades whence he had emerged, but not before he had perambulated the southern border. On the 6th of May, 1787, he set out on his journey, and, visiting all that appeared interesting on the north of the Tweed, proceeded to Newcastle and other places on the English side. He returned in about two months to his family at Mauchline; but in a short period he again set out on an excursion to the north, where he was most flatteringly received by all the great families. On his return to Mossgiel he completed his marriage with Jane Armour. He then concluded a bargain with Mr. Miller of Dalswinton, for a lease of the farm of Ellisland, on advantageous terms.

Burns entered on possession of this farm at Whitsunday, 1788. He had formerly applied with success for an excise commission, and during six weeks of the summer of this year he had to attend to the business of that profession at Ayr. His life for some time was thus wandering and unsettled; and Dr. Currie mentions this as one

of his chief misfortunes. Mrs. Burns came home to him towards the end of the year, and the poet was accustomed to say that the happiest period of his life was the first winter he spent in Elliesland. The neighboring farmers and gentlemen, pleased to obtain for a neighbor the poet by whose works they had been delighted, kindly sought his company, and invited him to their houses. Burns, however, found an inexpressible charm in sitting down beside his wife, at his own fireside; in wandering over his own grounds; in once more putting his hand to the spade and the plough; in forming his enclosures, and managing his cattle. For some months he felt almost all that felicity which fancy had taught him to expect in his new situation. He had been for a time idle; but his muscles were not yet unbraced for rural toil. He now seemed to find a joy in being the husband of the mistress of his affections, and in seeing himself the father of children such as promised to attach him forever to that modest, humble, and domestic life, in which alone he could hope to be permanently happy. Even his engagements in the service of the excise did not, at first, threaten either to contaminate the poet or to ruin the farmer.

From various causes, the farming speculation did not succeed. Indeed, from the time he obtained a situation under government, he gradually began to sink the farmer in the exciseman. Occasionally he assisted in the rustic occupations of Elliesland, but for the most part he was engaged in very different pursuits. In his professional per-

ambulations over the moors of Dumfriesshire he had to encounter temptations which a mind and temperament like his found it difficult to resist. His immortal works had made him universally known and enthusiastically admired; and accordingly he was a welcome guest at every house, from the most princely mansion to the lowest country inn. In the latter he was too frequently to be found as the presiding genius, and master of the orgies. However, he still continued at intervals to cultivate the muse; and, besides a variety of other pieces, he produced at this period the inimitable poem of *Tam O'Shanter*. Johnson's *Miscellany* was also indebted to him for the finest of its lyrics. One pleasing trait of his character must not be overlooked. He superintended the formation of a subscription library in the parish, and took the whole management of it upon himself. These institutions, though common now, were not so at the period of which we write; and it should never be forgotten that Burns was amongst the first, if not the very first, of their founders in the rural districts of southern Scotland.

Towards the close of 1791 he finally abandoned his farm; and obtaining an appointment to the Dumfries division of excise, he repaired to that town on a salary of £70 per annum. All his principal biographers concur in stating that after settling in Dumfries his moral career was downwards. Heron, who had some acquaintance with the matter, says: "His dissipation became still more deeply habitual; he was here more exposed than in the country to be solicited to share the

revels of the dissolute and the idle; foolish young men flocked eagerly about him, and from time to time pressed him to drink with them, that they might enjoy his wit. The Caledonian Club, too, and the Dumfriesshire and Galloway Hunt, had occasional meetings in Dumfries after Burns went to reside there; and the poet was of course invited to share their conviviality, and hesitated not to accept the invitation. In the intervals between his different fits of intemperance he suffered the keenest anguish of remorse, and horribly afflictive foresight. His Jane behaved with a degree of conjugal and maternal tenderness and prudence, which made him feel more bitterly the evil of his misconduct, although they could not reclaim him."

This is a dark picture, perhaps too dark. The Rev. Mr. Gray, who, as the teacher of his son, was intimately acquainted with Burns, and had frequent opportunities of judging of his general character and deportment, gives a more amiable portrait of the bard. Being an eye-witness, the testimony of this gentleman must be allowed to have some weight. "The truth is," says he, "Burns was seldom *intoxicated.* The drunkard soon becomes besotted, and is shunned even by the convivial. Had he been so, he could not have long continued the idol of every party." This is strong reasoning; and he goes on to mention other circumstances which seem to confirm the truth of his position. In balancing these two statements, a juster estimate of the moral deportment of Burns may be formed.

In the year 1792 party politics ran to a great

height in Scotland, and the liberal and independent spirit of Burns did certainly betray him into some indiscretions. A general opinion prevails, that he so far lost the good graces of his superiors by his conduct, as to consider all prospects of future promotion as hopeless. But this appears not to have been the case; and the fact that he acted as supervisor before his death is a strong proof to the contrary. Of his political verses few have as yet been published. But in these he warmly espoused the cause of the Whigs, which kept up the spleen of the other party, already sufficiently provoked; and this may in some measure account for the bitterness with which his own character was attacked.

Whatever opinion may be formed of the extent of his dissipation in Dumfries, one fact is unquestionable, that his powers remained unimpaired to the last; it was there he produced his finest lyrics, and they are the finest, as well as the purest, that ever delighted mankind. Besides Johnson's *Museum*, in which he took an interest to the last, and contributed most extensively, he formed a connection with Mr. George Thomson of Edinburgh. This gentleman had conceived the laudable design of collecting the national melodies of Scotland, with accompaniments by the most eminent composers, and poetry by the most eminent writers, in addition to those words which were originally attached to them. From the multitude of songs which Burns wrote from the year 1792 till the commencement of his illness, it is evident that few days could have passed without his producing

some stanzas for the work.' The following passage from his correspondence, which was also most extensive, proves that his songs were not hurriedly got up, but composed with the utmost care and attention. "Until I am complete master of a tune in my own singing, such as it is," says he, "I can never compose for it. My way is this. I consider the poetic sentiment correspondent to my idea of the musical expression, — then choose my theme, — compose one stanza. When that is composed, which is generally the most difficult part of the business, I walk out, — sit down now and then, — look out for objects in nature round me that are in unison or harmony with the cogitations of my fancy, and workings of my bosom, — humming every now and then the air, with the verses I have framed. When I feel my muse beginning to jade, I retire to the solitary fireside of my study, and there commit my effusions to paper; swinging at intervals on the hind legs of my elbow-chair, by way of calling forth my own critical strictures, as my pen goes. Seriously, this, at home, is almost invariably my way." This is not only interesting for the light which it throws upon his method of composition, but it proves that conviviality had not as yet greater charms for him than the muse.

From his youth Burns had exhibited ominous symptoms of a radical disorder in his constitution. A palpitation of the heart, and a derangement of the digestive organs, were conspicuous. These were, doubtless, increased by his indulgences, which became more frequent as he drew towards

the close of his career. In the autumn of 1795 he lost an only daughter, which was a severe blow to him. Soon afterwards he was seized with a rheumatic fever; and "long the die spun doubtful," says he, in a letter to his faithful friend Mrs. Dunlop, "until, after many weeks of a sick-bed, it seems to have turned up life, and I am beginning to crawl across my room." The cloud behind which his sun was destined to be eclipsed at noon had begun to darken above him. Before he had completely recovered, he had the imprudence to join a festive circle; and, on his return from it, he caught a cold, which brought back his trouble upon him with redoubled severity. Sea-bathing was had recourse to, but with no ultimate success. He lingered until the 21st of July, 1796, when he expired. The interest which the death of Burns excited was intense. All differences were forgotten; his genius only was thought of. On the 26th of the same month he was conveyed to the grave, followed by about ten thousand individuals of all ranks, many of whom had come from distant parts of the country to witness the solemnity. He was interred with military honors by the Dumfries volunteers, to which body he had belonged.

Thus, at the age of thirty-seven, an age when the mental powers of man have scarcely reached their climax, died Robert Burns, one of the greatest poets whom his country has produced. It is unnecessary to enter into any lengthened analysis of his poetry or character. His works are universally known and admired, and criticism has

been drawn to the dregs upon the subject; and that, too, by the greatest masters who have appeared since his death, — no mean test of the great merits of his writings. He excels equally in touching the heart by the exquisiteness of his pathos, and exciting the risible faculties by the breadth of his humor. His lyre had many strings, and he had equal command over them all; striking each, and frequently in chords, with the skill and power of a master. That his satire sometimes degenerates into coarse invective, cannot be denied; but where personality is not permitted to interfere, his poems of this description may take their place beside anything of the kind which has ever been produced, without being disgraced by the comparison. It is unnecessary to reëcho the praises of his best pieces, as there is no epithet of admiration which has not been bestowed upon them. Those who had best opportunities of judging are of opinion that his works, stamped as they are with the impress of sovereign genius, fall short of the powers he possessed. It is therefore to be lamented that he undertook no great work of fiction or invention. Had circumstances permitted, he would probably have done so; but his excise duties, and without doubt his own follies, prevented him. His passions were strong, and his capacity of enjoyment corresponded with them. These continually precipitated him into the vortex of pleasure, where alone they could be gratified; and the reaction consequent upon such indulgences (for he possessed the finest discrimination between right and wrong) threw him into low

spirits, to which he was also constitutionally liable. His mind, being thus never for any length of time in an equable tone, could scarcely pursue with steady regularity a work of any length. His moral aberrations, as detailed by some of his biographers, have been exaggerated, as already noticed. This has been proved by the testimony of many witnesses, from whose authority there can be no appeal; for they had the best opportunities of judging.

Dr. Currie's description of Burns, having been composed under advantages which no subsequent writer can enjoy, forms a desirable supplement to any memoir of his life.

"Burns was nearly five feet ten inches in height, and of a form that indicated agility as well as strength. His well-raised forehead, shaded with black curling hair, indicated extensive capacity. His eyes were large, dark, full of ardor and intelligence. His face was well formed, and his countenance uncommonly interesting and expressive. His mode of dressing, which was often slovenly, and a certain fulness and bend in his shoulders, characteristic of his original profession, disguised in some degree the natural symmetry and elegance of his form. The external appearance of Burns was most strikingly indicative of the character of his mind. On a first view, his physiognomy had a certain air of coarseness, mingled, however, with an expression of deep penetration, and of calm

thoughtfulness, approaching to melancholy. There appeared in his first manner and address, perfect ease and self-possession, but a stern and almost supercilious elevation, not, indeed, incompatible with openness and affability, which, however, bespoke a mind conscious of superior talents. Strangers that supposed themselves approaching an Ayrshire peasant who could make rhymes, and to whom their notice was an honor, found themselves speedily overawed by the presence of a man who bore himself with dignity, and who possessed a singular power of correcting forwardness and of repelling intrusion. But though jealous of the respect due to himself, Burns never enforced it where he saw it was willingly paid; and though inaccessible to the approaches of pride, he was open to every advance of kindness and of benevolence. His dark and haughty countenance easily relaxed into a look of good-will, of pity, or of tenderness; and as the various emotions succeeded each other in his mind, assumed with equal ease the expression of the broadest humor, of the most extravagant mirth, of the deepest melancholy, or of the most sublime emotion. The tones of his voice happily corresponded with the expression of his features, and with the feelings of his mind. When to these endowments are added a rapid and distinct apprehension, a most powerful understanding, and a happy command of language — of strength as well as brilliancy of expression — we shall be able to account for the extraordinary attractions of his conversation — for the sorcery which, in his social parties, he seemed to exert on

all around him. In the company of women, this sorcery was more especially apparent. Their presence charmed the fiend of melancholy in his bosom, and awoke his happiest feelings; it excited the powers of his fancy, as well as the tenderness of his heart; and by restraining the vehemence and the exuberance of his language, at times gave to his manners the impression of taste, and even of elegance, which in the company of men they seldom possessed. This influence was doubtless reciprocal. A Scottish lady, accustomed to the best society, declared with characteristic *naïveté*, that no man's conversation ever *carried her so completely off her feet* as that of Burns;[1] and an English lady, familiarly acquainted with several of the most distinguished characters of the present times, assured the editor, that in the happiest of his social hours, there was a charm about Burns which she had never seen equalled.[2] This charm arose not more from the power than the versatility of his genius. No languor could be felt in the society of a man who passed at pleasure from *grave to gay*, from the ludicrous to the pathetic, from the simple to the sublime; who wielded all his faculties with equal strength and ease, and never failed to impress the offspring of his fancy with the stamp of his understanding.

"This, indeed, is to represent Burns in his happiest phasis. In large and mixed parties, he was often silent and dark, sometimes fierce and over-

[1] It has been stated that this lady was Jane, Duchess of Gordon.

[2] Mrs. Walter Riddel is here meant.

bearing; he was jealous of the proud man's scorn, jealous to an extreme of the insolence of wealth, and prone to avenge, even on its innocent possessor, the partiality of fortune. By nature, kind, brave, sincere, and in a singular degree compassionate, he was, on the other hand, proud, irascible, and vindictive. His virtues and his failings had their origin in the extraordinary sensibility of his mind, and equally partook of the chills and glows of sentiment. His friendships were liable to interruption from jealousy or disgust, and his enmities died away under the influence of pity or self-accusation. His understanding was equal to the other powers of his mind, and his deliberate opinions were singularly candid and just; but, like other men of great and irregular genius, the opinions which he delivered in conversation were often the offspring of temporary feelings, and widely different from the calm decisions of his judgment. This was not merely true respecting the characters of others, but in regard to some of the most important points of human speculation."

PREFACE

TO THE

FIRST EDITION OF BURNS'S POEMS.

[THE first edition of Burns's poetry was published at Kilmarnock towards the end of July, 1786, with the title, *Poems, chiefly in the Scottish Dialect, by Robert Burns*, and the motto:

> "The Simple Bard, unbroke to rules of art,
> He pours the wild effusions of the heart:
> And if inspired, 'tis Nature's powers inspire;
> Hers all the melting thrill, and hers the kindling fire."
>
> ANONYMOUS

It contained the following pieces: — The Twa Dogs — Scotch Drink — The Author's Earnest Cry and Prayer — The Holy Fair — Address to the Deil — Mailie — To J. S**** [Smith] — A Dream — The Vision — Halloween — The Auld Farmer's New-year Morning's Salutation to his Auld Mare Maggie — The Cotter's Saturday Night — To a Mouse — Epistle to Davie — The Lament — Despondency, an Ode — Man was Made to Mourn — Winter, a Dirge — A Prayer in the Prospect of Death — To a Mountain Daisy — To Ruin — Epistle to a Young Friend — On a Scotch Bard gone to the West Indies — A Ded-

ication to G**** H*******, Esq. — To a Louse — Epistle to J. L******, an old Scots Bard — To the Same — Epistle to W. S******, Ochiltree — Epistle to J. R****** — Song, "It was upon a Lammas Night" — Song, "Now Westlin' Winds" — Song, "From thee, Eliza, I must go" — The Farewell to the Brethren of St. James's Lodge, Torbolton — Epitaphs and Epigrams — A Bard's Epitaph.

It was introduced by the following preface: —]

"The following trifles are not the production of the poet, who, with all the advantages of learned art, and perhaps amid the elegances and idlenesses of upper life, looks down for a rural theme, with an eye to Theocritus or Virgil. To the author of this, these and other celebrated names, their countrymen, are, in their original languages, *a fountain shut up, and a book sealed.* Unacquainted with the necessary requisites for commencing poet by rule, he sings the sentiments and manners he felt and saw in himself and his rustic compeers around him, in his and their native language. Though a rhymer from his earliest years, at least from the earliest impulses of the softer passions, it was not till very lately that the applause, perhaps the partiality, of friendship, wakened his vanity so far as to make him think anything of his worth shewing; and none of the following works were ever composed with a view to the press. To amuse himself with the little creations of his own fancy, amid the toil and fatigues of a laborious life; to transcribe the various feel-

ings, the loves, the griefs, the hopes, the fears in his own breast; to find some kind of counterpoise to the struggles of a world, always an alien scene, a task uncouth to the poetical mind, — these were his motives for courting the Muses, and in these he found poetry to be its own reward.

"Now that he appears in the public character of an author, he does it with fear and trembling. So dear is fame to the rhyming tribe, that even he, an obscure, nameless bard, shrinks aghast at the thought of being branded as — an impertinent blockhead, obtruding his nonsense on the world; and because he can make a shift to jingle a few doggerel Scotch rhymes together, looks upon himself as a poet of no small consequence forsooth!

"It is an observation of that celebrated poet[1] whose divine elegies do honour to our language, our nation, and our species, that '*Humility* has depressed many a genius to a hermit, but never raised one to fame!' If any critic catches at the word *genius*, the author tells him, once for all, that he certainly looks upon himself as possessed of some poetic abilities, otherwise his publishing in the manner he has done would be a manœuvre below the worst character which, he hopes, his worst enemy will ever give him. But to the genius of a Ramsay, or the glorious dawnings of the poor, unfortunate Fergusson, he, with equal unaffected sincerity, declares that, even in his highest pulse of vanity, he has not the most distant pretensions. These two justly-admired Scotch poets he has often had in his eye in the

[1] Shenstone.

following pieces, but rather with a view to kindle at their flame, than for servile imitation.

"To his subscribers the author returns his most sincere thanks. Not the mercenary bow over a counter, but the heart-throbbing gratitude of the bard, conscious how much he owes to benevolence and friendship for gratifying him, if he deserves it, in that dearest wish of every poetic bosom — to be distinguished. He begs his readers, particularly the learned and the polite, who may honour him with a perusal, that they will make every allowance for education and circumstances of life; but if, after a fair, candid, and impartial criticism, he shall stand convicted of dulness and nonsense, let him be done by as he would in that case do by others — let him be condemned, without mercy, to contempt and oblivion."

DEDICATION

PREFIXED TO THE SECOND EDITION.

PUBLISHED APRIL 21ST, 1787.

To the Noblemen and Gentlemen of the Caledonian Hunt.

MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN. — A Scottish bard, proud of the name, and whose highest ambition is to sing in his country's service — where shall he so properly look for patronage as to the illustrious names of his native land, those who bear the honours, and inherit the virtues, of their ancestors? The poetic genius of my country found me, as the prophetic bard Elijah did Elisha, at the plough, and threw her inspiring mantle over me. She bade me sing the loves, the joys, the rural scenes and rural pleasures of my native soil, in my native tongue. I tuned my wild, artless notes, as she inspired. She whispered me to come to this ancient metropolis of Caledonia, and lay my songs under your honoured protection. I now obey her dictates.

Though much indebted to your goodness, I do not approach you, my Lords and Gentlemen, in the usual style of dedication, to thank you for past favours; that path is so hackneyed by prostituted

learning, that honest rusticity is ashamed of it. Nor do I present this address with the venal soul of a servile author, looking for a continuation of those favours: — I was bred to the plough, and am independent. I come to claim the common Scottish name with you, my illustrious countrymen, and to tell the world that I glory in the title. I come to congratulate my country that the blood of her ancient heroes still runs uncontaminated; and that from your courage, knowledge, and public spirit, she may expect protection, wealth, and liberty. In the last place, I come to proffer my warmest wishes to the great fountain of honour, the Monarch of the Universe, for your welfare and happiness.

When you go forth to waken the echoes, in the ancient and favourite amusement of your forefathers, may pleasure ever be of your party, and may social joy await your return! When harassed in courts or camps with the justlings of bad men and bad measures, may the honest consciousness of injured worth attend your return to your native seats — and may domestic happiness, with a smiling welcome, meet you at your gates! May corruption shrink at your kindling indignant glance; and may tyranny in the ruler, and licentiousness in the people, equally find you an inexorable foe! I have the honour to be, with the sincerest gratitude and highest respect, my Lords and Gentlemen, your most devoted, humble servant,

ROBERT BURNS.

EDINBURGH, *4th April*, 1787.

POEMS.

ROBERT BURNS.

1759–1796.

HANDSOME NELL.

TUNE — *I am a Man Unmarried.*

O H once I loved a bonnie lass,
Ay, and I love her still;
And whilst that honour warms my breast,
I 'll love my handsome Nell.

As bonnie lasses I hae seen,
And mony full as braw;
But for a modest, gracefu' mien,
The like I never saw.

A bonnie lass, I will confess,
Is pleasant to the ee,
But without some better qualities,
She 's no the lass for me.

But Nelly's looks are blithe and sweet,
And, what is best of a',
Her reputation is complete,
And fair without a flaw.[1]

[1] Variation in Mr. John Dick's MS.: —

But Nelly's looks are blithe and sweet,
Good-humoured, frank, and free;

She dresses aye sae clean and neat,
Both decent and genteel:
And then there's something in her gait
Gars ony dress look weel.

A gaudy dress and gentle air
May slightly touch the heart;
But it 's innocence and modesty
That polishes the dart.

'T is this in Nelly pleases me,
'T is this enchants my soul;
For absolutely in my breast
She reigns without control.

I DREAMED I LAY.

I DREAMED I lay where flowers were springing
Gaily in the sunny beam;
Listening to the wild birds singing,
By a falling, crystal stream:
Straight the sky grew black and daring;
Through the woods the whirlwinds rave;
Trees with aged arms were warring,
O'er the swelling drumlie wave.

Such was my life's deceitful morning,
Such the pleasure I enjoyed;

And still the more I view them o'er,
The more they captive me.

The next verse is wanting in that MS.

But lang or noon, loud tempests storming,
A' my flowery bliss destroyed.
Though fickle Fortune has deceived me, —
She promised fair, and performed but ill;
Of mony a joy and hope bereaved me; —
I bear a heart shall support me still.

MY NANNIE, O.

TUNE — *My Nannie, O.*

BEHIND yon hills where Stinsiar flows,[1]
'Mang moors and mosses many, O,
The wintry sun the day has closed,
And I'll awa' to Nannie, O.

The westlin wind blaws loud and shill;
The night's baith mirk and rainy, O;
But I'll get my plaid, and out I'll steal,
And owre the hills to Nannie, O.

My Nannie 's charming, sweet, and young,
Nae artfu' wiles to win ye, O:
May ill befa' the flattering tongue
That wad beguile my Nannie, O!

Her face is fair, her heart is true,
As spotless as she 's bonny, O:
The opening gowan, wet wi' dew,
Nae purer is than Nannie, O.

[1] In subsequent copies, Burns was induced to substitute for the Stinsiar, which has local verity in its favor, the Lugar, a name thought to be more euphonious, but which is otherwise unsuitable.

A country lad is my degree,
And few there be that ken me, O;
But what care I how few they be?
I'm welcome aye to Nannie, O.

My riches a's my penny-fee,
And I maun guide it canny, O;
But warl's gear ne'er troubles me,
My thoughts are a' — my Nannie, O.

Our auld guidman delights to view
His sheep and kye thrive bonny, O;
But I'm as blithe that hauds his pleugh,
And has nae care but Nannie, O.

Come weal, come woe, I care nae by,
I'll tak what Heaven will send me, O;
Nae ither care in life have I,
But live and love my Nannie, O.

TIBBIE, I HAE SEEN THE DAY

TUNE — *Invercauld's Reel.*

O TIBBIE, I hae seen the day
Ye wad na been sae shy;
For lack o' gear ye lightly me,
But, trowth, I care na by.

Yestreen I met you on the moor,
Ye spak na, but gaed by like stoure;
Ye geck at me because I'm poor,
But fient a hair care I.

I doubt na, lass, but ye may think,
Because ye hae the name o' clink,
That ye can please me at a wink,
Whene'er you like to try.

But sorrow tak him that 's sae mean,
Although his pouch o' coin were clean,
Wha follows ony saucy quean,
That looks sae proud and high.

Although a lad were e'er sae smart,
If that he want the yellow dirt,
Ye 'll cast your head another airt,
And answer him fu' dry.

But if he hae the name o' gear,
Ye 'll fasten to him like a brier,
Though hardly he, for sense or lear,
Be better than the kye.

But, Tibbie, lass, tak my advice,
Your daddie's gear maks you sae nice;
The deil a ane wad speer your price,
Were ye as poor as I.

There lives a lass in yonder park,
I would na gie her in her sark,
For thee, wi' a' thy thousan' mark;
Ye need na look sae high.

THE TORBOLTON LASSES.

IF ye gae up to yon hill-tap,
Ye 'll there see bonnie Peggy;
She kens her father is a laird,
And she forsooth 's a leddy.

There Sophy tight, a lassie bright,
Besides a handsome fortune:
Wha canna win her in a night,
Has little art in courting.

Gae down by Faile, and taste the ale,
And tak a look o' Mysie;
She 's dour and din, a deil within,
But ablins she may please ye.

If she be shy, her sister try,
Ye 'll maybe fancy Jenny,
If ye 'll dispense wi' want o' sense —
She kens hersel she 's bonnie.

As ye gae up by yon hillside,
Speer in for bonnie Bessy;
She 'll gie ye a beck, and bid ye light,
And handsomely address ye.

There 's few sae bonnie, nane sae guid,
In a' King George' dominion;
If ye should doubt the truth o' this —
It 's Bessy's ain opinion!

THE RONALDS OF THE BENNALS.

IN Torbolton, ye ken, there are proper young men,
And proper young lasses and a', man;
But ken ye the Ronalds that live in the Bennals,
They carry the gree frae them a', man.

Their father 's a laird, and weel he can spare 't,
Braid money to tocher them a', man,
To proper young men, he 'll clink in the hand
Gowd guineas a hunder or twa, man.

There 's ane they ca' Jean, I 'll warrant ye 've seen
As bonnie a lass or as braw, man;
But for sense and guid taste she 'll vie wi' the best,
And a conduct that beautifies a', man.

The charms o' the min', the langer they shine,
The mair admiration they draw, man;
While peaches and cherries, and roses and lilies,
They fade and they wither awa, man.

If ye be for Miss Jean, tak this frae a frien',
A hint o' a rival or twa, man;
The Laird o' Blackbyre wad gang through the fire,
If that wad entice her awa, man.

The Laird o' Braehead has been on his speed,
For mair than a towmond or twa, man;

The Laird o' the Ford will straught on a board,
If he canna get her at a', man.

Then Anna comes in, the pride o' her kin,
The boast of our bachelors a', man:
Sae sonsy and sweet, sae fully complete,
She steals our affections awa, man.

If I should detail the pick and the wale
O' lasses that live here awa, man,
The fault wad be mine, if they didna shine,
The sweetest and best o' them a', man.

I lo'e her mysel, but darena weel tell,
My poverty keeps me in awe, man;
For making o' rhymes, and working at times,
Does little or naething at a', man.

Yet I wadna chooše to let her refuse,
Nor hae 't in her power to 'say na, man;
For though I be poor, unnoticed, obscure,
My stomach 's as proud as them a', man.

Though I canna ride in weel-booted pride,
And flee o'er the hills like a craw, man,
I can haud up my head wi' the best o' the breed,
Though fluttering ever so braw, man.

My coat and my vest, they are Scotch o' the best,
O' pairs o' guid breeks I hae twa, man,
And stockings and pumps to put on my stumps,
And ne'er a wrang steek in them a', man.

My sarks they are few, but five o' them new,
Twal' hundred, as white as the snaw, man,
A ten shillings hat, a Holland cravat;
There are no mony poets sae braw, man.

I never had frien's, weel stockit in means,
To leave me a hundred or twa, man;
Nae weel-tochered aunts, to wait on their drants,
And wish them in hell for it a', man.

I never was canny for hoardling o' money,
Or claughtin 't together at a', man;
I 've little to spend, and naething to lend,
But deevil a shilling I awe, man.

. . . . . .

ON CESSNOCK BANKS.[1]

TUNE — *If he be a Butcher neat and trim.*

ON Cessnock Banks there lives a lass;
Could I describe her shape and mien,
The graces of her weel-faured face,
And the glancing of her sparkling een!

[1] This piece appeared for the first time in Cromek's *Reliques*, the editor stating that he had recovered it "from the oral communication of a lady residing at Glasgow, whom the bard in early life affectionately admired." It seems not unlikely that Ellison herself had grown into this lady. A copy printed from the poet's manuscript in Pickering's edition of his works is considerably different in one stanza, presents an additional one, and exhibits a different concluding line to each verse —

"An' she 's twa sparkling roguish een."

She 's fresher than the morning dawn
When rising Phœbus first is seen,
When dew-drops twinkle o'er the lawn ;
And she 's twa glancing sparkling een.

She 's stately like yon youthful ash,
That grows the cowslip braes between,
And shoots its head above each bush ;
And she 's twa glancing sparkling een.

She 's spotless as the flowering thorn,
With flowers so white and leaves so green,
When purest in the dewy morn ;
And she 's twa glancing sparkling een.

Her looks are like the sportive lamb,
When flowery May adorns the scene,
That wantons round its bleating dam ;
And she 's twa glancing sparkling een.

Her hair is like the curling mist
That shades the mountain-side at e'en,
When flower-reviving rains are past ;
And she 's twa glancing sparkling een.

Her forehead 's like the showery bow,
When shining sunbeams intervene,
And gild the distant mountain's brow ;
And she 's twa glancing sparkling een.

Her voice is like the evening thrush
That sings in Cessnock Banks unseen,

While his mate sits nestling in the bush;
And she 's twa glancing sparkling een.

Her lips are like the cherries ripe
That sunny walls from Boreas screen:
They tempt the taste and charm the sight;
And she 's twa glancing sparkling een.

Her teeth are like a flock of sheep,
With fleeces newly washen clean,
That slowly mount the rising steep;
And she 's twa glancing sparkling een.[1]

Her breath is like the fragrant breeze
That gently stirs the blossomed bean,
When Phœbus sinks beneath the seas;
And she 's twa glancing sparkling een.

[Her cheeks are like yon crimson gem,
The pride of all the flowery scene,
Just opening on its thorny stem;
And she 's twa sparkling roguish een.][2]

But it 's not her air, her form, her face,
Though matching beauty's fabled queen,
But the mind that shines in every grace,
And chiefly in her sparkling een.

[1] Variation in Pickering's copy: —

Her teeth are like the nightly snow,
While pale the morning rises keen,
While hid the murmuring streamlets flow;
And she 's twa sparkling roguish een.

[2] The above is the additional stanza in Pickering's edition.

WINTER, A DIRGE.

THE wintry west extends his blast,
And hail and rain does blaw;
Or, the stormy north sends driving forth
The blinding sleet and snaw:
While, tumbling brown, the burn comes down,
And roars frae bank to brae;
And bird and beast in covert rest,
And pass the heartless day.

The sweeping blast, the sky o'ercast,
The joyless winter day,
Let others fear, — to me more dear
Than all the pride of May:
The tempest's howl, it soothes my soul,
My griefs it seems to join;
The leafless trees my fancy please,
Their fate resembles mine!

Thou Power Supreme, whose mighty scheme
These woes of mine fulfil,
Here firm I rest, — they must be best,
Because they are Thy will!
Then all I want (oh, do Thou grant
This one request of mine!)
Since to enjoy Thou dost deny,
Assist me to resign!

A PRAYER,

WRITTEN UNDER THE PRESSURE OF VIOLENT ANGUISH.

O H Thou great Being ! what Thou art
Surpasses me to know :
Yet sure I am, that known to Thee
Are all Thy works below.

Thy creature here before Thee stands,
All wretched and distrest ;
Yet sure those ills that wring my soul
Obey Thy high behest.

Sure Thou, Almighty, canst not act
From cruelty or wrath !
Oh free my weary eyes from tears,
Or close them fast in death !

But if I must afflicted be,
To suit some wise design,
Then man my soul with firm resolves
To bear, and not repine !

FROM A MEMORANDUM BOOK.

O H why the deuce should I repine,
And be an ill foreboder ?
I 'm twenty-three, and five feet nine,
I 'll go and be a sodger !

I gat some gear wi' mickle care,
I held it weel thegither ;

But now it 's gane, and something mair —
I 'll go and be a sodger !

Oh leave novels, ye Mauchline belles,
Ye 're safer at your spinning-wheel ;
Such witching books are baited hooks
For rakish rooks like Rob Mossgiel. . . .

Beware a tongue that 's smoothly hung,
A heart that warmly seems to feel ;
That feeling heart but acts a part ;
'T is rakish art in Rob Mossgiel. . .

MY FATHER WAS A FARMER.

Tune — *The Weaver and his Shuttle, O.*

MY father was a farmer upon the Carrick border, O,
And carefully he bred me in decency and order, O ;
He bade me act a manly part, though I had ne'er a farthing, O ;
For without an honest manly heart no man was worth regarding, O.

Then out into the world my course I did determine, O ;
Though to be rich was not my wish, yet to be great was charming, O :

My talents they were not the worst, nor yet my education, O;
Resolved was I, at least to try, to mend my situation, O.

In many a way, and vain essay, I courted fortune's favour, O;
Some cause unseen still stept between, to frustrate each endeavour, O.
Sometimes by foes I was o'erpowered, sometimes by friends forsaken, O;
And when my hope was at the top, I still was worst mistaken, O.

Then sore harassed, and tired at last, with fortune's vain delusion, O,
I dropt my schemes, like idle dreams, and came to this conclusion, O: —
The past was bad, and the future hid — its good or ill untried, O;
But the present hour was in my power, and so I would enjoy it, O.

No help, nor hope, nor view had I, nor person to befriend me, O;
So I must toil, and sweat, and broil, and labor to sustain me, O;
To plough and sow, to reap and mow, my father bred me early, O;
For one, he said, to labor bred, was a match for fortune fairly, O.

Thus all obscure, unknown, and poor, through life
I 'm doomed to wander, O,
Till down my weary bones I lay, in everlasting
slumber, O.
No view nor care, but shun whate'er might breed
me pain or sorrow, O;
I live to-day as well 's I may, regardless of to-
morrow, O.

But cheerful still, I am as well as a monarch in a
palace, O,
Though fortune's frown still hunts me down with
all her wonted malice, O:
I make indeed my daily bread, but ne'er can make
it further, O;
But as daily bread is all I need, I do not much
regard her, O.

When sometimes by my labor I earn a little
money, O,
Some unforeseen misfortune comes generally upon
me, O:
Mischance, mistake, or by neglect, or my good-
natured folly, O:
But come what will, I 've sworn it still, I 'll ne'er
be melancholy, O.

All you who follow wealth and power with unre-
mitting ardor, O,
The more in this you look for bliss, you leave
your view the further, O:

Had you the wealth Potosi boasts, or nations to adore you, O,
A cheerful honest-hearted clown I will prefer before you, O.

* * *

THE DEATH AND DYING WORDS OF POOR MAILIE, THE AUTHOR'S ONLY PET YOWE:

AN UNCO MOURNFU' TALE.

AS Mailie and her lambs thegither,
Were ae day nibbling on the tether,
Upon her cloot she coost a hitch,
And owre she warsled in the ditch:
There, groaning, dying, she did lie,
When Hughoc he cam doytin' by.

Wi' glowering een and lifted hands,
Poor Hughoc like a statue stands;
He saw her days were near-hand ended,
But, waes my heart! he could na mend it.
He gapèd wide, but naething spak —
At length poor Mailie silence brak.

'Oh thou, whose lamentable face
Appears to mourn my woefu' case!
My dying words attentive hear,
And bear them to my master dear.

'Tell him, if e'er again he keep
As muckle gear as buy a sheep,

O bid him never tie them mair
Wi' wicked strings o' hemp or hair!
But ca' them out to park or hill,
And let them wander at their will;
So may his flock increase, and grow
To scores o' lambs, and packs o' woo'!

'Tell him he was a master kin',
And aye was guid to me and mine;
And now my dying charge I gie him —
My helpless lambs I trust them wi' him.

'Oh, bid him save their harmless lives
Frae dogs, and tods, and butchers' knives!
But gie them guid cow-milk their fill,
Till they be fit to fend themsel;
And tent them duly, e'en and morn,
Wi' teats o' hay, and ripps o' corn.

'And may they never learn the gaets
Of other vile, wanrestfu' pets;
To slink through slaps, and reave and steal
At stacks o' peas, or stocks o' kail.
So may they, like their great forbears,
For mony a year come through the shears:
So wives will gie them bits o' bread,
And bairns greet for them when they 're dead.

'My poor toop-lamb, my son and heir,
Oh, bid him breed him up wi' care;
And if he live to be a beast,
To pit some havins in his breast!

'And warn him, what I winna name,
To stay content wi' yowes at hame;
And no to rin and wear his cloots,
Like ither menseless, graceless brutes.

'And neist my yowie, silly thing,
Gude keep thee frae a tether string;
Oh, may thou ne'er forgather up
Wi' ony blastit, moorland toop,
But aye keep mind to moop and mell
Wi' sheep o' credit like thysel.

'And now, my bairns, wi' my last breath
I lea'e my blessin' wi' you baith:
And when you think upo' your mither,
Mind to be kin' to ane anither.

'Now, honest Hughoc, dinna fail
To tell my master a' my tale;
And bid him burn his cursed tether,
And, for thy pains, thou 's get my blether.'

This said, poor Mailie turned her head,
And closed her een amang the dead.

POOR MAILIE'S ELEGY.

LAMENT in rhyme, lament in prose,
Wi' saut tears trickling down your nose:
Our bardie's fate is at a close,
Past a' remead;

The last sad cape-stane of his woes —
Poor Mailie 's dead !

It 's no the loss o' warl's gear,
That could sae bitter draw the tear,
Or mak our bardie, dowie, wear
The mourning weed :
He 's lost a friend and neibor dear,
In Mailie dead.

Through a' the toun she trotted by him ;
A lang half-mile she could descry him ;
Wi' kindly bleat, when she did spy him,
She ran wi' speed :
A friend mair faithfu' ne'er cam nigh him
Than Mailie dead.

I wat she was a sheep o' sense,
And could behave hersel wi' mense :
I 'll say 't she never brak a fence,
Through thievish greed.
Our bardie, lanely, keeps the spence
Sin' Mailie 's dead.

Or, if he wanders up the howe,
Her living image in her yowe,
Comes bleating to him, owre the knowe,
For bits o' bread ;
And down the briny pearls rowe
For Mailie dead.

She was nae get o' moorland tips,
Wi' tawted ket, and hairy hips,

For her forbears were brought in ships
Frae yont the Tweed:
A bonnier fleesh ne'er crossed the clips
Than Mailie dead.[1]

Wae worth the man wha first did shape
That vile, wanchancie thing a rape!
It makes guid fellows girn and gape,
Wi' chokin' dread;
And Robin's bonnet wave wi' crape,
For Mailie dead.

Oh a' ye bards on bonnie Doon!
And wha on Ayr your chanters tune!
Come, join the melancholious croon
O' Robin's reed!
His heart will never get aboon—
His Mailie 's dead!

JOHN BARLEYCORN—A BALLAD.

THERE were three kings into the east,
Three kings both great and high;
And they hae sworn a solemn oath
John Barleycorn should die.

[1] Variation in original MS.:—

She was nae get o' runted rams,
Wi' woo like goats, and legs like trams;
She was the flower o' Fairly lambs,
A famous breed;
Now Robin, greetin', chows the hams
O' Mailie dead.

They took a plough and ploughed him down,
Put clods upon his head;
And they hae sworn a solemn oath,
John Barleycorn was dead.

But the cheerful spring came kindly on,
And showers began to fall;
John Barleycorn got up again,
And sore surprised them all.

The sultry suns of summer came,
And he grew thick and strong;
His head weel armed wi' pointed spears,
That no one should him wrong.

The sober autumn entered mild,
When he grew wan and pale;
His bending joints and drooping head
Shewed he began to fail.

His colour sickened more and more,
He faded into age;
And then his enemies began
To shew their deadly rage.

They 've taen a weapon, long and sharp,
And cut him by the knee;
Then tied him fast upon a cart,
Like a rogue for forgerie.

They laid him down upon his back,
And cudgelled him full sore;

They hung him up before the storm,
And turned him o'er and o'er.

They filled up a darksome pit
With water to the brim;
They heaved in John Barleycorn,
There let him sink or swim.

They laid him out upon the floor
To work him further wo;
And still, as signs of life appeared,
They tossed him to and fro.

They wasted o'er a scorching flame
The marrow of his bones;
But a miller used him worst of all,
For he crushed him 'tween two stones.

And they hae taen his very heart's blood,
And drunk it round and round;
And still the more and more they drank,
Their joy did more abound.

John Barleycorn was a hero bold,
Of noble enterprise;
For if you do but taste his blood,
'T will make your courage rise.

'T will make a man forget his wo;
'T will heighten all his joy:
'T will make the widow's heart to sing,
Though the tear were in her eye.

Then let us toast John Barleycorn,
Each man a glass in hand;
And may his great posterity
Ne'er fail in old Scotland!

MARY MORRISON.

OH Mary, at thy window be,
It is the wished, the trysted hour!
Those smiles and glances let me see,
That make the miser's treasure poor:
How blithely wad I bide the stoure,
A weary slave frae sun to sun,
Could I the rich reward secure,
The lovely Mary Morrison.

Yestreen when to the trembling string,
The dance gaed through the lighted ha',
To thee my fancy took its wing,
I sat, but neither heard nor saw.
Though this was fair, and that was braw,
And yon the toast of a' the town,
I sighed, and said amang them a':
'Ye are na Mary Morrison.'

Oh Mary, canst thou wreck his peace,
Wha for thy sake wad gladly die?
Or canst thou break that heart of his,
Whase only faut is loving thee?
If love for love thou wilt na gie,
At least be pity to me shown;
A thought ungentle canna be
The thought o' Mary Morrison.

THE RIGS O' BARLEY.

TUNE — *Corn Rigs.*

IT was upon a Lammas night,
When corn rigs are bonnie,
Beneath the moon's unclouded light,
I held awa to Annie:
The time flew by wi' tentless heed,
Till 'tween the late and early,
Wi' sma' persuasion she agreed
To see me through the barley.

The sky was blue, the wind was still,
The moon was shining clearly;
I set her down wi' right good will
Amang the rigs o' barley;
I kent her heart was a' my ain;
I loved her most sincerely;
I kissed her owre and owre again
Amang the rigs o' barley.

I locked her in my fond embrace;
Her heart was beating rarely:
My blessings on that happy place,
Amang the rigs o' barley!
But by the moon and stars so bright,
That shone that hour so clearly,
She aye shall bless that happy night
Amang the rigs o' barley!

I hae been blithe wi' comrades dear;
I hae been merry drinkin';

I hae been joyfu' gath'rin' gear;
I hae been happy thinkin':
But a' the pleasures e'er I saw,
Though three times doubled fairly,
That happy night was worth them a',
Amang the rigs o' barley.

CHORUS.

Corn rigs, and barley rigs,
And corn rigs are bonnie:
I 'll ne'er forget that happy night
Amang the rigs wi' Annie.

MONTGOMERY'S PEGGY.

TUNE — *Gala Water.*

ALTHOUGH my bed were in yon muir
Amang the heather, in my plaidie,
Yet happy, happy would I be,
Had I my dear Montgomery's Peggy.

When o'er the hill beat surly storms,
And winter nights were dark and rainy,
I 'd seek some dell, and in my arms
I 'd shelter dear Montgomery's Peggy.

Were I a baron proud and high,
And horse and servants waiting ready,
Then a' 't wad gie o' joy to me,
The sharin 't with Montgomery's Peggy.

SONG COMPOSED IN AUGUST.

TUNE—*I had a horse, I had nae mair.*

NOW westlin winds and slaught'ring guns
Bring autumn's pleasant weather;
The moorcock springs, on whirring wings,
Amang the blooming heather.
Now waving grain, wide o'er the plain,
Delights the weary farmer;
And the moon shines bright, when I rove at night
To muse upon my charmer.

The partridge loves the fruitful fells;
The plover loves the mountains;
The woodcock haunts the lonely dells;
The soaring hern the fountains:
Through lofty groves the cushat roves,
The path of man to shun it;
The hazel-bush o'erhangs the thrush,
The spreading thorn the linnet.

Thus every kind their pleasure find,
The savage and the tender;
Some social join, and leagues combine;
Some solitary wander:
Avaunt, away! the cruel sway,
Tyrannic man's dominion;
The sportsman's joy, the murdering cry,
The fluttering gory pinion.

But Peggy, dear, the evening 's clear,
Thick flies the skimming swallow;

The sky is blue, the fields in view,
All fading-green and yellow:
Come, let us stray our gladsome way,
And view the charms of nature;
The rustling corn, the fruited thorn,
And every happy creature.

We 'll gently walk, and sweetly talk,
Till the silent moon shine clearly;
I 'll grasp thy waist, and fondly prest,
Swear how I love thee dearly:
Not vernal showers to budding flowers,
Not autumn to the farmer,
So dear can be as thou to me,
My fair, my lovely charmer!

INSCRIPTION ON THE TOMBSTONE OF WILLIAM BURNESS.

OH ye whose cheek the tear of pity stains,
Draw near with pious rev'rence and attend!
Here lie the loving husband's dear remains,
The tender father, and the gen'rous friend.

The pitying heart that felt for human wo;
The dauntless heart that feared no human pride;
The friend of man, to vice alone a foe;
"For even his failings leaned to virtue's side."

A PRAYER IN THE PROSPECT OF DEATH.

OH thou unknown, Almighty Cause
Of all my hope and fear!
In whose dread presence, ere an hour,
Perhaps I must appear!

If I have wandered in those paths
Of life I ought to shun,
As something, loudly, in my breast,
Remonstrates I have done;

Thou know'st that Thou hast formèd me
With passions wild and strong;
And listening to their witching voice
Has often led me wrong.

Where human weakness has come short,
Or frailty stept aside,
Do thou, All-good! — for such thou art, —
In shades of darkness hide.

Where with intention I have erred,
No other plea I have,
But, Thou art good; and goodness still
Delighteth to forgive.

STANZAS ON THE SAME OCCASION.

WHY am I loth to leave this earthly scene ?
Have I so found it full of pleasing charms ?
Some drops of joy with draughts of ill between :
Some gleams of sunshine 'mid renewing storms :
Is it departing pangs my soul alarms ?
Or death's unlovely, dreary, dark abode ?
For guilt, for guilt, my terrors are in arms ;
I tremble to approach an angry God,
And justly smart beneath his sin-avenging rod.

Fain would I say, " Forgive my foul offence ! "
Fain promise never more to disobey ;
But should my Author health again dispense,
Again I might desert fair Virtue's way :
Again in Folly's path might go astray ;
Again exalt the brute, and sink the man ;
Then how should I for heavenly mercy pray,
Who act so counter heavenly mercy's plan ?
Who sin so oft have mourned, yet to temptation ran ?

Oh Thou, great Governor of all below !
If I may dare a lifted eye to Thee,
Thy nod can make the tempest cease to blow,
Or still the tumult of the raging sea :
With that controlling power assist even me

Those headlong furious passions to confine;
For all unfit I feel my powers to be,
To rule their torrent in the allowed line;
Oh, aid me with Thy help, Omnipotence Divine![1]

THE FIRST PSALM.

THE man, in life wherever placed,
Hath happiness in store,
Who walks not in the wicked's way,
Nor learns their guilty lore!

Nor from the seat of scornful pride
Casts forth his eyes abroad,
But with humility and awe
Still walks before his God.

That man shall flourish like the trees
Which by the streamlets grow;
The fruitful top is spread on high,
And firm the root below.

But he whose blossom buds in guilt,
Shall to the ground be cast,
And, like the rootless stubble, tost
Before the sweeping blast.

[1] In Mr. Dick's MS. is apparently an earlier copy of this poem, containing some variations expressive of deeper contrition than what here appears. After "Again I might desert fair Virtue's way," comes, "Again by passion would be led astray." The second line of the last stanza is, "If one so black with crimes dare on thee call."

For why? that God the good adore
Hath given them peace and rest,
But hath decreed that wicked men
Shall ne'er be truly blest.

THE FIRST SIX VERSES OF THE NINETIETH PSALM.

OH Thou, the first, the greatest friend
Of all the human race!
Whose strong right hand has ever been
Their stay and dwelling-place!

Before the mountains heaved their heads
Beneath thy forming hand,
Before this ponderous globe itself
Arose at Thy command;

That Power which raised and still upholds
This universal frame,
From countless, unbeginning time,
Was ever still the same.

Those mighty periods of years
Which seem to us so vast,
Appear no more before Thy sight
Than yesterday that 's past.

Thou giv'st the word: Thy creature man,
Is to existence brought;

Again Thou say'st: "Ye sons of men,
Return ye into nought!"

Thou layest them with all their cares
In everlasting sleep;
As with a flood Thou tak'st them off,
With overwhelming sweep.

They flourish like the morning flower,
In beauty's pride arrayed;
But long ere night, cut down, it lies
All withered and decayed.

EPISTLE TO JOHN RANKINE.

O H rough, rude, ready-witted Rankine,
The wale o' cocks for fun and drinkin'!
There 's mony godly folks are thinkin',
Your dreams and tricks
Will send you, Korah-like, a-sinkin',
Straught to Auld Nick's.

Ye hae sae mony cracks and cants,
And in your wicked, drucken rants,
Ye mak a devil o' the saunts,
And fill them fou;
And then their failings, flaws, and wants,
Are a' seen through.

Hypocrisy, in mercy spare it!
That holy robe, oh dinna tear it!

Spare 't for their sakes wha aften wear it,
The lads in black !
But your curst wit, when it comes near it,
Rives 't aff their back.

Think, wicked sinner, wha ye 're skaithing :
It 's just the blue-gown badge and claithing
O' saunts ; tak that, ye lea'e them naithing
To ken them by,
Frae ony unregenerate heathen
Like you or I.

I 've sent you here some rhyming ware,
A' that I bargained for, and mair ;
Sae, whan ye hae an hour to spare,
I will expect
Yon sang, ye 'll sen 't wi' canny care,
And no neglect.

Though, faith, sma' heart hae I to sing !
My muse dow scarcely spread her wing ;
I 've played mysel a bonnie spring,
And danced my fill ;
I 'd better gaen and sair't the king
At Bunker's Hill.

'T was ae night lately, in my fun,
I gaed a-roving wi' the gun,
And brought a paitrick to the grun',
A bonnie hen,
And as the twilight was begun,
Thought nane wad ken.

The poor wee thing was little hurt;
I straikit it a wee for sport,
Ne'er thinking they wad fash me for 't;
But deil-ma-care!
Somebody tells the poacher-court
The hale affair.

Some auld used hands had taen a note
That sic a hen had got a shot;
I was suspected for the plot;
I scorned to lie;
So gat the whistle o' my groat,
And pay 't the fee. . . .

As soon 's the clocking-time is by,
And the wee pouts begun to cry,
L—, I'se hae sportin' by and by,
For my gowd guinea,
Though I should hunt the buckskin kye
For 't in Virginia. . . .

It puts me aye as mad 's a hare;
So I can rhyme and write nae mair;
But pennyworths again is fair,
When time 's expedient:
Meanwhile I am, respected sir,
Your most obedient.

GREEN GROW THE RASHES.

TUNE — *Green grow the Rashes.*

THERE 'S nought but care on every hand,
In every hour that passes, O:
What signifies the life o' man,
And 't were na for the lasses, O.

CHORUS.

Green grow the rashes, O!
Green grow the rashes, O!
The sweetest hours that e'er I spend
Are spent amang the lasses, O.

The warly race may riches chase,
And riches still may fly them, O;
And though at last they catch them fast,
Their hearts can ne'er enjoy them, O.

Gie me a canny hour at e'en,
My arms about my dearie, O;
And warly cares, and warly men,
May a' gae tapsalteerie, O.

For you sae douce ye sneer at this,
Ye 're nought but senseless asses, O:
The wisest man the warl' e'er saw,
He dearly loved the lasses, O.

Auld Nature swears, the lovely dears
Her noblest work she classes, O:

Her 'prentice hand she tried on man,
And then she made the lasses, O.

THE CURE FOR ALL CARE.

TUNE—*Prepare, my dear Brethren, to the Tavern let 's fly.*

NO churchman am I for to rail and to write,
No statesman nor soldier to plot or to fight,
No sly man of business contriving a snare;
For a big-bellied bottle 's the whole of my care.

The peer I don't envy, I give him his bow;
I scorn not the peasant, though ever so low;
But a club of good fellows, like those that are here,
And a bottle like this, are my glory and care.

Here passes the squire on his brother — his horse;
There centum per centum, the cit with his purse;
But see you The Crown, how it waves in the air!
There a big-bellied bottle still eases my care.

The wife of my bosom, alas! she did die;
For sweet consolation to church I did fly;
I found that old Solomon provèd it fair,
That a big-bellied bottle 's a cure for all care.

I once was persuaded a venture to make;
A letter informed me that all was to wreck;
But the pursy old landlord just waddled up stairs,
With a glorious bottle that ended my cares.

'Life's cares, they are comforts'—a maxim laid down
By the bard, what d'ye call him, that wore the black gown;
And, faith, I agree with th' old prig to a hair;
For a big-bellied bottle 's a heaven of care.

ADDED IN A MASON LODGE.

Then fill up a bumper, and make it o'erflow,
And honors masonic prepare for to throw;
May every true brother of th' compass and square
Have a big-bellied bottle when harassed with care!

"THOUGH CRUEL FATE SHOULD BID US PART."

THOUGH cruel Fate should bid us part,
As far 's the Pole and Line,
Her dear idea round my heart
Should tenderly entwine.

Though mountains frown and deserts howl,
And oceans roar between;
Yet, dearer than my deathless soul,
I still would love my Jean.

One night as I did wander,
When corn begins to shoot,
I sat me down to ponder,
Upon an auld tree-root.

Auld Ayr ran by before me,
And bickered to the seas,
A cushat crooded o'er me,
That echoed through the braes.

ROBIN.

TUNE — *Dainty Davie.*

THERE was a lad was born in Kyle,
But whatna day o' whatna style,
I doubt it 's hardly worth my while
To be sae nice wi' Robin.
Robin was a rovin' boy,
Rantin' rovin', rantin' rovin';
Robin was a rovin' boy,
Rantin' rovin' Robin!

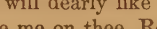
Our monarch's hindmost year but ane
Was five-and-twenty days begun,
'T was then a blast o' Janwar' win'
Blew handsel in on Robin.

The gossip keekit in his loof,
Quo' scho, wha lives will see the proof,
This waly boy will be nae coof;
I think we 'll ca' him Robin.

He 'll hae misfortunes great and sma',
But aye a heart aboon them a';

He 'll be a credit till us a';
We 'll a' be proud o' Robin.

But sure as three times three mak nine,
I see by ilka score and line,
This chap will dearly like our kin',
So leeze me on thee, Robin.



ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF ROBERT RUISSEAUX.

NOW Robin lies in his last lair,
He 'll gabble rhyme nor sing nae mair,
Cauld poverty, wi' hungry stare,
Nae mair shall fear him;
Nor anxious fear, nor cankert care,
E'er mair come near him.

To tell the truth, they seldom fash't him,
Except the moment that they crush't him;
For sune as chance or fate had hush't 'em,
Though e'er sae short,
Then wi' a rhyme or sang he lash't 'em,
And thought it sport.

Though he was bred to kintra wark,
And counted was baith wight and stark,
Yet that was never Robin's mark
To mak a man;
But tell him, he was learned and clark,
Ye roosed him than!

THE BELLES OF MAUCHLINE.

IN Mauchline there dwells six proper young belles,
The pride of the place and its neighbourhood a',
Their carriage and dress, a stranger would guess,
In Lon'on or Paris, they 'd gotten it a'.
Miss Miller is fine, Miss Markland 's divine,
Miss Smith she has wit, and Miss Betty is braw,
There 's beauty and fortune to get wi' Miss Morton;
But Armour 's the jewel for me o' them a'.

WHEN FIRST I CAME TO STEWART KYLE.

TUNE — *I had a Horse, I had nae mair.*

WHEN first I came to Stewart Kyle,
My mind it was na steady,
Where'er I gaed, where'er I rade,
A mistress still I had aye.

But when I came roun' by Mauchline toun,
Not dreadin' anybody,
My heart was caught before I thought,
And by a Mauchline lady.

THOUGH FICKLE FORTUNE HAS DECEIVED ME.

THOUGH fickle fortune has deceived me,
She promised fair, and performed but ill;
Of mistress, friends, and wealth bereaved me,
Yet I bear a heart shall support me still.

I 'll act with prudence as far 's I 'm able,
But if success I must never find,
Then come misfortune, I bid thee welcome,
I 'll meet thee with an undaunted mind.[1]

OH RAGING FORTUNE'S WITHERING BLAST.

OH raging fortune's withering blast
Has laid my leaf full low, O!
Oh raging fortune's withering blast
Has laid my leaf full low, O!

My stem was fair, my bud was green,
My blossom sweet did blow, O;
The dew fell fresh, the sun rose mild,
And made my branches grow, O.

[1] "The above was an extempore, under the pressure of a heavy train of misfortunes, which indeed threatened to undo me altogether." — B.

But luckless fortune's northern storms
Laid a' my blossoms low, O!
But luckless fortune's northern storms
Laid a' my blossoms low, O!

EPISTLE TO DAVIE,

A BROTHER POET.

WHILE winds frae aff Ben-Lomond blaw,
And bar the doors wi' driving snaw,
And hing us owre the ingle,
I set me down to pass the time,
And spin a verse or two o' rhyme,
In hamely westlin' jingle.
While frosty winds blaw in the drift,
Ben to the chimla lug,
I grudge a wee the great folk's gift,
That live sae bien and snug:
I tent less, and want less
Their roomy fireside;
But hanker and canker
To see their cursed pride.

It 's hardly in a body's power
To keep, at times, frae being sour,
To see how things are shared;
How best o' chiels are whiles in want,
While coofs on countless thousands rant,
And ken na how to wair 't;
But, Davie, lad, ne'er fash your head;

Though we hae little gear,
We 're fit to win our daily bread,
As lang 's we 're hale and fier:
'Mair spier na, nor fear na,'
Auld age ne'er mind a feg,
The last o' 't, the warst o' 't,
Is only but to beg.

To lie in kilns and barns at e'en,
When banes are crazed, and bluid is thin,
Is doubtless great distress!
Yet then content could make us blest;
Even then, sometimes we 'd snatch a taste
Of truest happiness.
The honest heart that 's free frae a'
Intended fraud or guile,
However fortune kick the ba',
Has aye some cause to smile:
And mind still, you 'll find still,
A comfort this nae sma';
Nae mair then, we 'll care then,
Nae farther we can fa'.

What though, like commoners of air,
We wander out we know not where,
But either house or hal'?
Yet nature's charms, the hills and woods.
The sweeping vales, and foaming floods,
Are free alike to all.
In days when daisies deck the ground,
And blackbirds whistle clear,
With honest joy our hearts will bound
To see the coming year:

On braes when we please then,
We 'll sit and sowth a tune;
Syne rhyme till 't, we 'll time till 't,
And sing 't when we hae dune.

It 's no in titles nor in rank,
It 's no in wealth like Lon'on bank,
To purchase peace and rest;
It 's no in making muckle *mair;*
It 's no in books; it 's no in lear,
To mak us truly blest;
If happiness hae not her seat
And centre in the breast,
We may be wise, or rich, or great,
But never can be blest;
Nae treasures nor pleasures
Could make us happy lang;
The heart aye 's the part aye
That makes us right or wrang.

Think ye, that sic as you and I,
Wha drudge and drive through wet and dry,
Wi' never-ceasing toil;
Think ye, we are less blest than they,
Wha scarcely tent us in their way,
As hardly worth their while?
Alas! how aft, in haughty mood,
God's creatures they oppress!
Or else, neglecting a' that 's guid,
They riot in excess!
Baith careless and fearless
Of either heaven or hell!
Esteeming and deeming
It 's a' an idle tale!

Then let us cheerfu' acquiesce;
Nor make our scanty pleasures less,
By pining at our state;
And even should misfortunes come,
I, here wha sit, hae met wi' some,
An 's thankfu' for them yet.
They gie the wit of age to youth;
They let us ken oursel';
They make us see the naked truth,
The real guid and ill.
Though losses and crosses
Be lessons right severe,
There 's wit there, ye 'll get there,
Ye 'll find nae other where.

But tent me, Davie, ace o' hearts!
(To say aught less wad wrang the cartes,
And flatt'ry I detest)
This life has joys for you and I;
And joys that riches ne'er could buy;
And joys the very best.
There 's a' the pleasures o' the heart,
The lover and the frien';
Ye hae your Meg, your dearest part,
And I my darling Jean!
It warms me, it charms me,
To mention but her name:
It heats me, it beets me,
And sets me a' on flame!

Oh all ye powers who rule above!
Oh Thou whose very self art love!
Thou know'st my words sincere!

The life-blood streaming through my heart,
Or my more dear immortal part,
Is not more fondly dear!
When heart-corroding care and grief
Deprive my soul of rest,
Her dear idea brings relief
And solace to my breast.
Thou Being, all-seeing,
Oh hear my fervent prayer!
Still take her, and make her
Thy most peculiar care!

All hail, ye tender feelings dear!
The smile of love, the friendly tear,
The sympathetic glow!
Long since, this world's thorny ways
Had numbered out my weary days,
Had it not been for you!
Fate still has blest me with a friend,
In every care and ill;
And oft a more endearing band,
A tie more tender still.
It lightens, it brightens
The tenebrific scene,
To meet with, and greet with
My Davie or my Jean!

Oh how that name inspires my style!
The words come skelpin', rank and file,
Amaist before I ken!
The ready measure rins as fine
As Phœbus and the famous Nine
Were glowrin' owre my pen.

My spaviet Pegasus will limp,
Till ance he 's fairly het;
And then he 'll hilch, and stilt, and jimp,
And rin an unco fit:
But lest then, the beast then
Should rue this hasty ride,
I 'll light now, and dight now
His sweaty, wizened hide.

DEATH AND DR. HORNBOOK:

A TRUE STORY.

SOME books are lies frae end to end,
And some great lies were never penned:
Ev'n ministers they hae been kenned,
In holy rapture,
A rousing whid at times to vend,
And nail 't wi' Scripture.

But this that I am gaun to tell,
Which lately on a night befell,
Is just as true 's the deil 's in hell,
Or Dublin city:
That e'er he nearer comes oursel'
'S a muckle pity.

The clachan yill had made me canty —
I was na fou, but just had plenty;

I stachered whyles, but yet took tent aye
To free the ditches;
And hillocks, stanes, and bushes kenn'd aye
Frae ghaists and witches.

The rising moon began to glow'r
The distant Cumnock hills out-owre:
To count her horns, wi' a' my power,
I set mysel';
But whether she had three or four,
I could na tell.

I was come round about the hill,
And todlin' down on Willie's mill,
Setting my staff wi' a' my skill,
To keep me sicker;
Though leeward whyles, against my will,
I took a bicker.

I there wi' Something did forgather,
That put me in an eerie swither;
An awfu' scythe, out-owre ae shouther,
Clear-dangling, hang;
A three-taed leister on the ither
Lay, large and lang.

Its stature seemed lang Scotch ells twa,
The queerest shape that e'er I saw;
For fient a wame it had ava;
And then, its shanks,
They were as thin, as sharp and sma',
As cheeks o' branks.

"Guid e'en," quo' I; "friend, hae ye been
mawin',
When ither folk are busy sawin'?"
It seemed to mak a kind o' stan',
But naething spak;
At length says I: "Friend, whare ye gaun?
Will ye go back?"

It spake right howe: "My name is Death,
But be na fley'd." Quoth I: "Guid faith,
Ye 're maybe come to stap my breath;
But tent me, billie —
I red ye weel, tak care o' scaith,
See, there 's a gully!"

"Guidman," quo' he, "put up your whittle,
I 'm no designed to try its mettle;
But if I did, I wad be kittle
To be mislear'd;
I wadna mind it, no that spittle
Out-owre my beard."

"Weel, weel!" says I, "a bargain be 't;
Come, gie 's your hand, and say we 're gree't?
We 'll ease our shanks and tak a seat —
Come, gie 's your news;
This while ye hae been mony a gaet,
At mony a house."

"Ay, ay!" quo' he, and shook his head,
"It 's e'en a lang lang time indeed
Sin' I began to nick the thread,
And choke the breath:

Folk maun do something for their bread,
And sae maun Death.

"Sax thousand years are near hand fled
Sin' I was to the butching bred,
And mony a scheme in vain 's been laid,
To stap or scaur me;
Till ane Hornbook 's taen up the trade,
And faith he 'll waur me.

"Ye ken Jock Hornbook i' the clachan,
Deil mak his king's-hood in a spleuchan!
He 's grown sae weel acquant wi' Buchan
And ither chaps,
The weans haud out their fingers laughin',
And pouk my hips.

"See, here 's a scythe, and there 's a dart,
They hae pierced mony a gallant heart;
But Doctor Hornbook wi' his art
And cursèd skill,
Has made them baith no worth a —;
D—d haet they 'll kill.

"'T was but yestreen, nae further gaen,
I threw a noble throw at ane;
Wi' less, I 'm sure, I 've hundreds slain;
But deil-ma-care,
It just played dirl on the bane,
But did nae mair.

"Hornbook was by wi' ready art,
And had sae fortified the part,

That when I looked to my dart,
It was sae blunt,
Fient haet o' 't wad hae pierced the heart
O' a kail-runt.

"I drew my scythe in sic a fury,
I near hand cowpit wi' my hurry,
But yet the bauld apothecary
Withstood the shock;
I might as weel hae tried a quarry
O' hard whin rock.

"Even them he canna get attended,
Although their face he ne'er had kenned it,
Just — in a kail-blade and send it,
As soon 's he smells 't,
Baith their disease and what will mend it
At once he tells 't.

"And then a' doctor's saws and whittles,
Of a' dimensions, shapes, and metals,
A' kinds o' boxes, mugs, and bottles,
He 's sure to hae;
Their Latin names as fast he rattles
As A B C.

"Calces o' fossils, earths, and trees;
True sal-marinum o' the seas;
The farina of beans and peas,
He has 't in plenty;
Aqua-fontis, what you please,
He can content ye.

"Forbye some new, uncommon weapons,
Urinus spiritus of capons,
Or mite-horn shavings, filings, scrapings,
Distilled *per se*,
Sal-alkali o' midge-tail clippings,
And mony mae."

"Wae 's me for Johnny Ged's Hole now,'
Quo' I; "if that thae news be true,
His braw calf-ward where gowans grew,
Sae white and bonny,
Nae doubt they 'll rive it wi' the pleugh;
They 'll ruin Johnny!"

The creature grained an eldritch laugh,
And says: "Ye need na yoke the pleugh,
Kirkyards will soon be tilled eneugh,
Tak ye nae fear:
They 'll a' be trenched wi' mony a sheugh,
In twa-three year.

"Whare I killed ane a fair strae death,
By loss o' blood or want o' breath,
This night, I 'm free to tak my aith,
That Hornbook's skill
Has clad a score i' their last claith,
By drap and pill.

"An honest wabster to his trade,
Whase wife's twa nieves were scarce weel-bred
Gat tippence-worth to mend her head,
When it was sair;

The wife slade cannie to her bed,
But ne'er spak mair.

"A bonny lass, ye ken her name,
Some ill-brewn drink had hoved her wame;
She trusts hersel', to hide the shame,
To Hornbook's care;
Horn sent her aff to her lang hame,
To hide it there.

"A country laird had taen the batts,
Or some curmurring in his guts;
His only son for Hornbook sets,
And pays him well —
The lad, for twa guid gimmer-pets,
Was laird himsel',

"That 's just a swatch o' Hornbook's way;
Thus goes he on from day to day,
Thus does he poison, kill, and slay,
An 's weel paid for 't;
Yet stops me o' my lawfu' prey
Wi' his d—d dirt.

"But hark! I 'll tell you of a plot,
Though dinna ye be speaking o' 't;
I 'll nail the self-conceited sot
As dead 's a herrin':
Niest time we meet, I 'll wad a groat,
He gets his fairin'!"

But just as he began to tell,
The auld kirk-hammer strak the bell,

Some wee short hour ayont the twal,
Which raised us baith:
I took the way that pleased mysel',
And sae did Death.

EPISTLE TO J. LAPRAIK,

AN OLD SCOTTISH BARD.

WHILE briers and woodbines budding green,
And paitricks scraichin' loud at e'en,
And morning poussie whiddin seen,
Inspire my Muse,
This freedom in an unknown frien'
I pray excuse.

On Fasten-e'en we had a rockin',
To ca' the crack and weave our stockin';
And there was muckle fun and jokin',
Ye need na doubt;
At length we had a hearty yokin'
At sang about.

There was ae sang, amang the rest,
Aboon them a' it pleased me best,
That some kind husband had addrest
To some sweet wife:
It thirled the heart-strings through the breast,
A' to the life.

I've scarce heard ought described sae weel,
What generous manly bosoms feel;

Thought I, "Can this be Pope, or Steele,
Or Beattie's wark?"
They tauld me 't was an odd kind chiel
About Muirkirk.

It pat me fidgin-fain to hear 't,
And sae about him there I spier 't,
Then a' that kent him round declared
He had ingine,
That nane excelled it, few cam near 't,
It was sae fine.

That, set him to a pint of ale,
And either douce or merry tale,
Or rhymes and sangs he 'd made himsel',
Or witty catches,
'Tween Inverness and Teviotdale,
He had few matches.

Then up I gat, and swore an aith,
Though I should pawn my pleugh and graith,
Or die a cadger pownie's death
At some dyke back,
A pint and gill I 'd gie them baith
To hear your crack.

But, first and foremost, I should tell,
Amaist as soon as I could spell,
I to the crambo-jingle fell,
Though rude and rough,
Yet crooning to a body's sell,
Does weel eneugh.

I am nae poet, in a sense,
But just a rhymer, like, by chance,
And hae to learning nae pretence,
Yet, what the matter!
Whene'er my Muse does on me glance,
I jingle at her.

Your critic folk may cock their nose,
And say: "How can you e'er propose,
You, wha ken hardly verse frae prose,
To mak a sang?"
But, by your leaves, my learned foes,
Ye 're maybe wrang.

What 's a' your jargon o' your schools,
Your Latin names for horns and stools?
If honest Nature made you fools,
What sairs your grammars?
Ye 'd better taen up spades and shools,
Or knappin-hammers.

A set o' dull conceited hashes,
Confuse their brains in college-classes!
They gang in stirks, and come out asses,
Plain truth to speak;
And syne they think to climb Parnassus
By dint o' Greek!

Gie me ae spark o' Nature's fire!
That 's a' the learning I desire;
Then though I drudge through dub and mire
At pleugh or cart,

My Muse, though hamely in attire,
May touch the heart.

Oh for a spunk o' Allan's glee,
Or Fergusson's, the bauld and slee,
Or bright Lapraik's, my friend to be,
If I can hit it!
That would be lear eneugh for me,
If I could get it!

Now, sir, if ye hae friends enow,
Though real friends I b'lieve are few,
Yet, if your catalogue be fou,
I 'se no insist,
But gif ye want ae friend that 's true,
I 'm on your list.

I winna blaw about mysel';
As ill I like my fauts to tell;
But friends and folk that wish me well,
They sometimes roose me;
Though I maun own, as monie still
As far abuse me.

But Mauchline race, or Mauchline fair,
I should be proud to meet you there;
We 'se gie ae night's discharge to Care,
If we forgather,
And hae a swap o' rhymin'-ware
Wi' ane anither.

The four-gill chap, we 'se gar him clatter,
And kirsen him wi' reekin' water;

Syne we 'll sit down and tak our whitter,
To cheer our heart;
And, faith, we 'se be acquainted better
Before we part.

Awa' ye selfish warly race,
Wha think that havins, sense, and grace,
Even love and friendship should give place
To catch the plack!
I dinna like to see your face,
Nor hear your crack.

But ye whom social pleasure charms,
Whose hearts the tide of kindness warms,
Who hold your being on the terms,
"Each aid the others,"
Come to my bowl, come to my arms,
My friends, my brothers!

But, to conclude my lang epistle,
As my auld pen 's worn to the grissle;
Twa lines frae you wad gar me fissle,
Who am, most fervent,
While I can either sing or whissle,
Your friend and servant.

SECOND EPISTLE TO J. LAPRAIK.

WHILE new-ca'd kye rowte at the stake,
And pownies reek in pleugh or braik,
This hour on e'enin's edge I take,
To own I 'm debtor,

To honest-hearted auld Lapraik,
For his kind letter.

Forjeskit sair, wi' weary legs,
Rattlin' the corn out-owre the rigs,
Or dealing through amang the naigs
Their ten-hours' bite,
My awkwart Muse sair pleads and begs
I would na write.

The tapetless ramfeezl'd hizzie,
She 's saft at best, and something lazy,
Quo' she: "Ye ken, we 've been sae busy
This month and mair,
That trouth, my head is grown right dizzie,
And something sair."

Her dowff excuses pat me mad:
"Conscience," says I, "ye thowless jad!
I 'll write, and that a hearty blaud,
This very night;
Sae dinna ye affront your trade,
But rhyme it right.

"Shall bauld Lapraik, the king o' hearts,
Though mankind were a pack o' cartes,
Roose you sae weel for your deserts,
In terms sae friendly,
Yet ye 'll neglect to shaw your parts,
And thank him kindly?"

Sae I gat paper in a blink,
And down gaed stumpie in the ink:

Quoth I: "Before I sleep a wink,
I vow I 'll close it;
And if ye winna mak it clink,
By Jove I 'll prose it!"

Sae I 've begun to scrawl, but whether
In rhyme, or prose, or baith thegither,
Or some hotch-potch that 's rightly neither,
Let time mak proof;
But I shall scribble down some blether,
Just clean aff-loof.

My worthy friend, ne'er grudge and carp,
Though fortune use you hard and sharp;
Come, kittle up your moorland harp
Wi' gleesome touch;
Ne'er mind how Fortune waft and warp —
She 's but a b—h!

She 's gien me monie a jirt and fleg,
Sin' I could striddle owre a rig;
But, by the L—, though I should beg
Wi' lyart pow,
I 'll laugh, and sing, and shake my leg,
As lang 's I dow!

Now comes the sax-and-twentieth simmer,
I 've seen the bud upo' the timmer,
Still persecuted by the limmer,
Frae year to year;
But yet, despite the kittle kimmer,
I, Rob, am here.

Do ye envy the city gent,
Behint a kist to lie and sklent,
Or purse-proud, big wi' cent. per cent.
And muckle wame,
In some bit brugh to represent
A bailie's name?

Or is 't the paughty, feudal thane,
Wi' ruffled sark and glancing cane,
Wha thinks himsel' nae sheep-shank bane,
But lordly stalks,
While caps and bonnets aff are taen,
As by he walks?

Oh Thou wha gies us each guid gift!
Gie me o' wit and sense a lift,
Then turn me, if Thou please, adrift,
Through Scotland wide;
Wi' cits nor lairds I wadna shift,
In a' their pride!

Were this the charter of our state,
"On pain o' hell be rich and great,"
Damnation then would be our fate,
Beyond remead;
But, thanks to Heaven, that 's no the gaet
We learn our creed.

For thus the royal mandate ran,
When first the human race began —
"The social, friendly, honest man,
Whate'er he be,

'T is he fulfils great Nature's plan,
And none but he!"

Oh mandate glorious and divine!
The followers o' the ragged Nine,
Poor thoughtless devils! yet may shine
In glorious light,
While sordid sons o' Mammon's line
Are dark as night.

Though here they scrape, and squeeze, and growl,
Their worthless nievefu' of a soul
May in some future carcass howl,
The forest's fright;
Or in some day-detestin' owl
May shun the light.

Then may Lapraik and Burns arise,
To reach their native kindred skies,
And sing their pleasures, hopes, and joys,
In some mild sphere,
Still closer knit in friendship's ties,
Each passing year!

EPISTLE TO JOHN GOUDIE OF KILMARNOCK,

ON THE PUBLICATION OF HIS ESSAYS.

OH, Goudie! terror of the Whigs,
Dread of black coats and reverend wigs,

Sour Bigotry, on her last legs,
Girnin', looks back,
Wishin' the ten Egyptian plagues
Wad seize you quick.

Poor gapin', glowrin' Superstition,
Wae 's me! she 's in a sad condition;
Fie! bring Black Jock, her state-physician,
To see her water.
Alas! there 's ground o' great suspicion
She 'll ne'er get better.

Auld Orthodoxy lang did grapple,
But now she 's got an unco ripple;
Haste, gie her name up i' the chapel,
Nigh unto death;
See, how she fetches at the thrapple,
And gasps for breath.

Enthusiasm 's past redemption,
Gane in a galloping consumption,
Not a' the quacks, wi' a' their gumption,
Will ever mend her.
Her feeble pulse gies strong presumption
Death soon will end her.

'T is you and Taylor are the chief
Wha are to blame for this mischief,
But gin the L—'s ain fouk gat leave,
A toom tar-barrel
And twa red peats wad send relief,
And end the quarrel.

THE TWA HERDS; OR, THE HOLY TULZIE.

O H a' ye pious godly flocks,
Weel fed on pastures orthodox,
Wha now will keep ye frae the fox,
Or worrying tykes,
Or wha will tent the waifs and crocks,
About the dikes?

The twa best herds in a' the wast,
That e'er gae Gospel-horn a blast,
These five-and-twenty simmers past,
Oh dool to tell,
Hae had a bitter black outcast
Atween themsel'.

Oh, Moodie, man, and wordy Russell,
How could you raise so vile a bustle!
Ye 'll see how New-Light herds will whistle,
And think it fine:
The L—'s cause ne'er got sic a twistle
Sin' I hae min'.

Oh, sirs! whae'er wad hae expeckit,
Your duty ye wad sae negleckit,
Ye wha were ne'er by lairds respeckit,
To wear the plaid,
But by the brutes themselves eleckit,
To be their guide.

What flock wi' Moodie's flock could rank,
Sae hale and hearty every shank!

Nae poisoned sour Arminian stank
He let them taste,
Frae Calvin's well, aye clear, they drank —
Oh sic a feast!

The thummart, wil'-cat, brock, and tod,
Weel kenn'd his voice through a' the wood,
He smelt their ilka hole and road,
Baith out and in,
And weel he liked to shed their bluid,
And sell their skin.

What herd like Russell telled his tale,
His voice was heard through muir and dale,
He kenn'd the L—'s sheep, ilka tail,
O'er a' the height,
And saw gin they were sick or hale,
At the first sight.

He fine a mangy sheep could scrub,
Or nobly fling the Gospel club,
And New-Light herds could nicely drub,
Or pay their skin;
Could shake them o'er the burning dub,
Or heave them in.

Sic twa — oh, do I live to see 't,
Sic famous twa should disagreet,
And names like villain, hypocrite,
Ilk ither gi'en,
While New-Light herds, wi' laughin' spite,
Say neither 's lieing!

A' ye wha tent the Gospel fauld,
There 's Duncan, deep, and Peebles, shaul,
But chiefly thou, apostle Auld,
We trust in thee,
That thou wilt work them, het and cauld,
Till they agree.

Consider, sirs, how we 're beset;
There 's scarce a new herd that we get,
But comes frae 'mang that cursèd set
I winna name;
I hope frae heaven to see them yet
In fiery flame.

Dalrymple has been lang our fae,
M'Gill has wrought us meikle wae,
And that cursed rascal ca'd M'Quhae,
And baith the Shaws,
That aft hae made us black and blae,
Wi' vengefu' paws.

Auld Wodrow lang has hatched mischief,
We thought aye death wad bring relief,
But he has gotten, to our grief,
Ane to succeed him,
A chield wha 'll soundly buff our beef;
I meikle dread him.

And monie a ane that I could tell,
Wha fain would openly rebel,
Forby turn-coats amang oursel';
There 's Smith for ane,

I doubt he 's but a gray-nick quill,
And that ye 'll fin'.

Oh a' ye flocks o'er a' the hills,
By mosses, meadows, moors, and fells,
Come, join your counsel and your skills
To cowe the lairds,
And get the brutes the powers themsels
To choose their herds.

Then Orthodoxy yet may prance,
And Learning in a woody dance,
And that fell cur ca'd Common Sense,
That bites sae sair,
Be banished o'er the sea to France:
Let him bark there.

Then Shaw's and D'rymple's eloquence,
M'Gill's close nervous excellence,
M'Quhae's pathetic manly sense,
And guid M'Math,
Wi' Smith, wha through the heart can glance,
May a' pack aff.

TO WILLIAM S[IMPSON],

OCHILTREE.

I GAT your letter, winsome Willie;
Wi' gratefu' heart I thank you brawly;

Though I maun say 't, I wad be silly,
And unco vain,
Should I believe, my coaxin' billie,
Your flatterin' strain.

But I 'se believe ye kindly meant it,
I sud be laith to think ye hinted
Ironic satire, sidelins sklented
On my poor Musie;
Though in sic phrasin' terms ye 've penned it
I scarce excuse ye.

My senses wad be in a creel,
Should I but dare a hope to speel
Wi' Allan or wi' Gilbertfield,
The braes o' fame;
Or Fergusson, the writer chiel,
A deathless name.

(Oh, Fergusson! thy glorious parts
Ill suited law's dry musty arts!
My curse upon your whunstane hearts,
Ye E'nbrugh gentry;
The tithe o' what ye waste at cartes
Wad stowed his pantry!)

Yet when a tale comes i' my head,
Or lasses gie my heart a screed,
As whiles they 're like to be my dead,
(Oh sad disease!)
I kittle up my rustic reed;
It gies me ease.

Auld Coila now may fidge fu' fain,
She 's gotten poets o' her ain,
Chiels wha their chanters winna hain,
But tune their lays,
Till echoes a' resound again
Her weel-sung praise.

Nae poet thought her worth his while,
To set her name in measured style ;
She lay like some unkenn'd-of isle
Beside New Holland,
Or whare wild-meeting oceans boil
Besouth Magellan.

Ramsay and famous Fergusson
Gied Forth and Tay a lift aboon ;
Yarrow and Tweed, to monie a tune,
Owre Scotland rings ;
While Irwin, Lugar, Ayr, and Doon,
Naebody sings.

Th' Illissus, Tiber, Thames, and Seine,
Glide sweet in monie a tunefu' line ;
But, Willie, set your fit to mine,
And cock your crest,
We 'll gar our streams and burnies shine
Up wi' the best !

We 'll sing auld Coila's plains and fells,
Her moors red-brown wi' heather-bells,
Her banks and braes, her dens and dells,
Where glorious Wallace

Aft bure the gree, as story tells,
Frae southron billies.

At Wallace' name what Scottish blood
But boils up in a spring-tide flood!
Oft have our fearless fathers strode
By Wallace' side,
Still pressing onward, red-wat shod,
Or glorious died!

O sweet are Coila's haughs and woods
When lintwhites chant amang the buds,
And jinkin' hares, in amorous whids,
Their loves enjoy,
While through the braes the cushat croods
With wailfu' cry!

Even winter bleak has charms to me,
When winds rave through the naked tree;
Or frosts on hills of Ochiltree
Are hoary gray;
Or blinding drifts wild furious flee,
Darkening the day!

O Nature! a' thy shows and forms
To feeling, pensive hearts hae charms!
Whether the summer kindly warms,
Wi' life and light,
Or winter howls, in gusty storms,
The lang, dark night!

The Muse, nae poet ever fand her,
Till by himsel' he learned to wander,

Adown some trotting burn's meander,
And no think lang;
O sweet, to stray and pensive ponder
A heartfelt sang!

The war'ly race may drudge and drive,
Hog-shouther, jundie, stretch and strive;
Let me fair Nature's face descrive,
And I wi' pleasure,
Shall let the busy grumbling hive
Bum owre their treasure.

Fareweel, "my rhyme-composing brither!"
We 've been owre lang unkenn'd to ither:
Now let us lay our heads thegither,
In love fraternal;
May Envy wallop in a tether,
Black fiend infernal!

While Highlandmen hate tolls and taxes;
While moorlan' herds like guid fat braxies,
While terra firma on her axis
Diurnal turns,
Count on a friend, in faith and practice,
In ROBERT BURNS.

POSTSCRIPT.

My memory 's no worth a preen,
I had amaist forgotten clean,
Ye bade me write you what they mean
By this New Light,

'Bout which our herds sae aft hae been
Maist like to fight.

In days when mankind were but callans
At grammar, logic, and sic talents,
They took nae pains their speech to balance,
Or rules to gie,
But spak their thoughts in plain braid lallans.
Like you or me.

In thae auld times, they thought the moon,
Just like a sark, or pair o' shoon,
Wore by degrees, till her last roon
Gaed past their viewing,
And shortly after she was done,
They gat a new one.

This passed for certain — undisputed;
It ne'er cam i' their heads to doubt it,
Till chiels gat up, and wad confute it,
And ca'd it wrang;
And muckle din there was about it,
Baith loud and lang.

Some herds, well learned upo' the beuk,
Wad threap auld folk the thing misteuk;
For 't was the auld moon turned a neuk,
And out o' sight,
And backlins-comin', to the leuk
She grew mair bright.

This was denied — it was affirmed;
The herds and hirsels were alarmed;

The reverend gray-beards raved and stormed,
That beardless laddies
Should think they better were informed
Than their auld daddies.

Frae less to mair, it gaed to sticks;
Frae words and aiths to clours and nicks,
And mony a fallow gat his licks,
Wi' hearty crunt;
And some, to learn them for their tricks,
Were hanged and brunt.

This game was played in monie lands,
And Auld-Light caddies bure sic hands,
That, faith, the youngsters took the sands
Wi' nimble shanks,
Till lairds forbade, by strict commands,
Sic bluidy pranks.

But New-Light herds gat sic a cowe,
Folk thought them ruined stick-and-stowe,
Till now amaist on every knowe
Ye 'll find ane placed;
And some their New-Light fair avow,
Just quite barefaced.

Nae doubt the Auld-Light flocks are bleatin';
Their zealous herds are vexed and sweatin';
Mysel' I 've even seen them greetin'
Wi' girnin' spite,
To hear the moon sae sadly lied on
By word and write.

But shortly they will cowe the loons!
Some Auld-Light herds in neebor towns
Are mind't in things they ca' balloons
To tak a flight,
And stay ae month among the moons,
And see them right.

Guid observation they will gie them;
And when the auld moon 's gaun to lea'e them,
The hindmost shaird, they 'll fetch it wi' them,
Just i' their pouch,
And when the New-Light billies see them,
I think they 'll crouch!

Sae, ye observe that a' this clatter
Is naething but a "moonshine matter;"
But though dull prose-folk Latin splatter
In logic tulzie,
I hope we bardies ken some better
Than mind sic brulzie.

HOLY WILLIE'S PRAYER.

O H Thou, wha in the heavens dost dwell,
Wha, as it pleases best thysel',
Sends ane to heaven, and ten to hell,
A' for thy glory,
And no for ony guid or ill
They 've done afore thee!

I bless and praise thy matchless might,
Whan thousands thou hast left in night,
That I am here afore thy sight,
For gifts and grace,
A burnin' and a shinin' light
To a' this place.

What was I, or my generation,
That I should get sic exaltation,
I wha deserve sic just damnation
For broken laws,
Five thousand years 'fore my creation,
Through Adam's cause.

When frae my mither's womb I fell,
Thou might hae plungèd me in hell,
To gnash my gums, to weep and wail,
In burning lake,
Whare d—d devils roar and yell,
Chained to a stake.

Yet I am here, a chosen sample,
To shew thy grace is great and ample;
I 'm here a pillar in thy temple,
Strong as a rock,
A guide, a buckler, an example,
To a' thy flock.

But yet, oh L—! confess I must,
At times I 'm fash'd wi' fleshly lust;
And sometimes too wi' warldly trust,
Vile self gets in;

But thou remembers we are dust,
Defiled in sin.

. . . . . .

Maybe thou lets this fleshly thorn,
Beset thy servant e'en and morn,
Lest he owre high and proud should turn,
'Cause he 's sae gifted;
If sae, thy hand maun e'en be borne,
Until thou lift it.

L—, bless thy chosen in this place,
For here thou hast a chosen race:
But G— confound their stubborn face,
And blast their name,
Wha bring thy elders to disgrace
And public shame.

L—, mind Gawn Hamilton's deserts;
He drinks, and swears, and plays at cartes,
Yet has sae monie takin' arts,
Wi' grit and sma',
Frae G—'s ain priests the people's hearts
He steals awa'.

And whan we chasten'd him therefor,
Thou kens how he bred sic a splore,
As set the warld in a roar
O' laughin' at us:
Curse thou his basket and his store,
Kail and potatoes.

L—, hear my earnest cry and prayer,
Against the presbyt'ry of Ayr;

Thy strong right hand, L—, mak it bare
Upo' their heads,
L—, weigh it down, and dinna spare,
For their misdeeds.

Oh L—, my G—, that glib-tongued Aiken,
My very heart and saul are quakin',
To think how we stood groanin', shakin',
And swat wi' dread,
While he wi' hingin' lip and snakin',
Held up his head.

L—, in the day of vengeance try him,
L—, visit them wha did employ him,
And pass not in thy mercy by 'em,
Nor hear their prayer;
But for thy people's sake destroy 'em,
And dinna spare.

But, L—, remember me and mine,
Wi' mercies temp'ral and divine,
That I for gear and grace may shine,
Excelled by nane,
And a' the glory shall be thine,
Amen, Amen!

EPITAPH ON HOLY WILLIE.

HERE Holy Willie's sair-worn clay
Taks up its last abode;

His saul has ta'en some other way,
I fear the left-hand road.

Stop! there he is, as sure 's a gun,
Poor silly body, see him;
Nae wonder he 's as black 's the grun',
Observe wha 's standing wi' him.

Your brunstane devilship, I see,
Has got him there before ye;
But haud your nine-tail cat a wee,
Till ance you 've heard my story.

Your pity I will not implore,
For pity ye hae nane;
Justice, alas! has gien him o'er,
And mercy's day is gane.

But hear me, sir, deil as ye are,
Look something to your credit;
A coof like him wad stain your name,
If it were kent ye did it.

THIRD EPISTLE TO J. LAPRAIK.

GUID speed and furder to you, Johnny,
Guid health, hale han's, and weather bonny;
Now when ye 're nickan down fu' canny
The staff o' bread,
May ye ne'er want a stoup o' bran'y
To clear your head.

May Boreas never thrash your rigs,
Nor kick your rickles aff their legs,
Sendin' the stuff o'er muirs and haggs
Like drivin' wrack;
But may the tapmast grain that wags
Come to the sack.

I 'm bizzie too, and skelpin' at it,
But bitter, daudin' showers hae wat it,
Sae my auld stumpie pen I gat it
Wi' muckle wark,
And took my jocteleg and whatt it,
Like ony clark.

It 's now twa month that I 'm your debtor,
For your braw, nameless, dateless letter,
Abusin' me for harsh ill-nature
On holy men,
While deil a hair yoursel' ye 're better,
But mair profane.

But let the kirk-folk ring their bells,
Let 's sing about our noble sel's;
We 'll cry nae jads frae heathen hills
To help, or roose us,
But browster-wives and whisky-stills,
They are the muses.

Your friendship, sir, I winna quat it,
And if ye mak objections at it,
Then han' in nieve some day we 'll knot it,
And witness take,

And when wi' usquebae we 've wat it,
It winna break.

But if the beast and branks be spared
Till kye be gaun without the herd,
And a' the vittel in the yard,
And theekit right,
I mean your ingle-side to guard
Ae winter-night.

Then muse-inspirin' aqua vitæ
Shall make us baith sae blithe and witty,
Till ye forget ye 're auld and gutty,
And be as canty
As ye were nine year less than thretty —
Sweet ane-and-twenty!

But stooks are cowpit wi' the blast,
And now the sinn keeks in the west,
Then I maun rin amang the rest,
And quat my chanter;
Sae I subscribe myself in haste
Yours, RAB THE RANTER.

EPISTLE TO THE REV. JOHN M'MATH.

WHILE at the stook the shearers cower
To shun the bitter blaudin' shower,
Or in gulravage rinnin' scower
To pass the time,
To you I dedicate the hour
In idle rhyme.

My Musie, tired wi' monie a sonnet
On gown, and ban', and douce black bonnet,
Is grown right eerie, now she 's done it,
Lest they should blame her,
And rouse their holy thunder on it,
And anathém her.

I own 't was rash, and rather hardy,
That I, a simple country bardie,
Should meddle wi' a pack sae sturdy,
Wha, if they ken me,
Can easy, wi' a single wordie,
Lowse h— upon me.

But I gae mad at their grimaces,
Their sighin', cantin', grace-proud faces,
Their three-mile prayers, and hauf-mile graces,
Their raxin' conscience,
Whase greed, revenge, and pride disgraces
Waur nor their nonsense.

There 's Gawn, misca't waur than a beast,
Wha has mair honour in his breast
Than mony scores as guid 's the priest
Wha sae abus't him ;
And may a bard no crack his jest
What way they 've use't him ?

See him, the poor man's friend in need,
The gentleman in word and deed,
And shall his fame and honour bleed
By worthless skellums,

And not a Muse erect her head
To cowe the blellums?

O Pope, had I thy satire's darts,
To gie the rascals their deserts,
I'd rip their rotten, hollow hearts,
And tell aloud
Their jugglin' hocus-pocus arts
To cheat the crowd.

G— knows I'm no the thing I should be,
Nor am I even the thing I could be,
But twenty times I rather would be
An atheist clean,
Than under gospel colours hid be,
Just for a screen.

An honest man may like a glass,
An honest man may like a lass;
But mean revenge, and malice fause,
He 'll still disdain,
And then cry zeal for gospel laws,
Like some we ken.

They take religion in their mouth;
They talk o' mercy, grace, and truth,
For what? to gie their malice skouth
On some puir wight,
And hunt him down, o'er right and ruth,
To ruin straight.

All hail, Religion! maid divine!
Pardon a Muse sae mean as mine,

Who in her rough imperfect line,
Thus daurs to name thee;
To stigmatise false friends of thine
Can ne'er defame thee.

Though blotch't and foul wi' mony a stain,
And far unworthy of thy train,
With trembling voice I tune my strain
To join with those
Who boldly daur thy cause maintain
In spite o' foes:

In spite o' crowds, in spite o' mobs,
In spite o' undermining jobs,
In spite o' dark banditti stabs
At worth and merit,
By scoundrels, even wi' holy robes,
But hellish spirit.

O Ayr! my dear, my native ground,
Within thy presbyterial bound
A candid liberal band is found
Of public teachers,
As men, as Christians too, renowned,
And manly preachers.

Sir, in that circle you are named;
Sir, in that circle you are famed;
And some, by whom your doctrine 's blamed
(Which gies you honour),
Even, sir, by them your heart 's esteemed,
And winning manner.

Pardon this freedom I have ta'en,
And if impertinent I 've been,
Impute it not, good sir, in ane
Whase heart ne'er wranged ye,
But to his utmost would befriend
Ought that belanged ye.

TO A MOUSE,

ON TURNING UP HER NEST WITH THE PLOUGH, NOVEMBER, 1785.

WEE, sleekit, cow'rin', tim'rous beastie,
Oh what a panic 's in thy breastie!
Thou need na start awa' sae hasty,
Wi' bickering brattle!
I wad be laith to rin and chase thee,
Wi' murd'ring pattle!

I 'm truly sorry man's dominion
Has broken Nature's social union,
And justifies that ill opinion,
Which makes thee startle
At me, thy poor earthborn companion,
And fellow-mortal!

I doubt na, whyles, but thou may thieve;
What then? poor beastie, thou maun live!
A daimen icker in a thrave
'S a sma' request:
I 'll get a blessin' wi' the laive,
And never miss 't!

Thy wee bit housie, too, in ruin!
Its silly wa's the win's are strewin'!
And naething now to big a new ane
O' foggage green,
And bleak December's winds ensuin',
Baith snell and keen!

Thou saw the fields laid bare and waste,
And weary winter comin' fast,
And cozie here, beneath the blast,
Thou thought to dwell,
Till, crash! the cruel coulter passed
Out through thy cell.

That wee bit heap o' leaves and stibble,
Has cost thee mony a weary nibble!
Now thou 's turned out for a' thy trouble,
But house or hald,
To thole the winter's sleety dribble,
And cranreuch cauld!

But, Mousie, thou art no thy lane,
In proving foresight may be vain:
The best-laid schemes o' mice and men,
Gang aft a-gley,
And lea'e us nought but grief and pain
For promised joy.

Still thou art blest, compared wi' me!
The present only toucheth thee:
But, och! I backward cast my e'e,
On prospects drear!
And forward, though I canna see,
I guess and fear.

HALLOWEEN.

"Yes! let the rich deride, the proud disdain,
The simple pleasures of the lowly train;
To me more dear, congenial to my heart,
One native charm, than all the gloss of art."
GOLDSMITH.

UPON that night, when fairies light
On Cassilis Downans dance,
Or owre the lays, in splendid blaze,
On sprightly coursers prance;
Or for Colean the route is ta'en,
Beneath the moon's pale beams,
There, up the Cove to stray and rove,
Amang the rocks and streams
To sport that night,

Amang the bonnie, winding banks,
Where Doon rins, wimplin', clear,
Where Bruce ance ruled the martial ranks,
And shook his Carrick spear,
Some merry, friendly, country-folks
Together did convene,
To burn their nits, and pou their stocks,
And haud their Halloween
Fu' blithe that night.

The lasses feat, and cleanly neat,
Mair braw than when they 're fine;
Their faces blithe, fu' sweetly kythe,
Hearts leal, and warm, and kin':
The lads sae trig, wi' wooer-babs
Weel knotted on their garten,

Some unco blate, and some wi' gabs
Gar lasses' hearts gang startin'
Whiles fast at night.

Then, first and foremost, through the kail,
Their stocks maun a' be sought ance;
They steek their een, and graip, and wale,
For muckle anes and straught anes.
Poor hav'rel Will fell aff the drift,
And wandered through the bow-kail;
And pou't, for want o' better shift,
A runt was like a sow-tail,
Sae bow't that night.

Then, straught or crooked, yird or nane,
They roar and cry a' throu'ther;
The very wee things, todlin', rin
Wi' stocks out-owre their shouther:
And gif the custoc 's sweet or sour,
Wi' joctelegs they taste them;
Syne cozily aboon the door,
Wi' cannie care, they 've placed them
To lie that night.

The lasses staw frae 'mang them a'
To pou their stalks o' corn;
But Rab slips out, and jinks about,
Behint the muckle thorn:
He grippet Nelly hard and fast;
Loud skirlèd a' the lasses;
But her tap-pickle maist was lost,
When kuittlin' in the fause-house
Wi' him that night.

The auld guidwife's weel-hoordit nits
Are round and round divided;
And mony lads' and lasses' fates
Are there that night decided:
Some kindle couthie, side by side,
And burn thegither trimly;
Some start awa' wi' saucy pride,
And jump out-owre the chimlie
Fu' high that night.

Jean slips in twa wi' tentie e'e;
Wha 't was, she wadna tell;
But this is Jock, and this is me,
She says in to hersel':
He bleezed owre her, and she owre him,
As they wad never mair part;
Till, fuff! he started up the lum,
And Jean had e'en a sair heart
To see 't that night.

Poor Willie, wi' his bow-kail runt,
Was brunt wi' primsie Mallie;
And Mary, nae doubt, took the drunt,
To be compared to Willie.
Mall's nit lap out wi' pridefu' fling,
And her ain fit it brunt it;
While Willie lap, and swore, by jing,
'T was just the way he wanted
To be that night.

Nell had the fause-house in her min',
She pits hersel' and Rob in;
In loving bleeze they sweetly join,

Till white in ase they 're sobbin'.
Nell's heart was dancin' at the view,
She whispered Rob to leuk for 't:
Rob stowlins prie'd her bonny mou'
Fu' cozie in the neuk for 't,
Unseen that night.

But Merran sat behint their backs,
Her thoughts on Andrew Bell;
She lea'es them gashin' at their cracks,
And slips out by hersel':
She through the yard the nearest taks
And to the kiln she goes then,
And darklins graipit for the bauks,
And in the blue-clue throws then,
Right fear't that night.

And aye she win't, and aye she swat,
I wat she made nae jaukin';
Till something held within the pat,
Guid L—! but she was quakin'!
But whether 't was the deil himsel',
Or whether 't was a bauk-en',
Or whether it was Andrew Bell,
She did na wait on talkin'
To spier that night.

Wee Jenny to her granny says:
"Will ye go wi' me, granny?
I'll eat the apple at the glass
I gat frae Uncle Johnny:"
She fuff't her pipe wi' sic a lunt,
In wrath she was sae vap'rin',

She notic't na, an aizle brunt
Her braw new worset apron
Out through that night.

"Ye little skelpie-limmer's face!
I daur you try sic sportin',
As seek the foul thief ony place,
For him to spae your fortune:
Nae doubt but ye may get a sight!
Great cause ye hae to fear it;
For mony a ane has gotten a fright,
And lived and died deleeret
On sic a night.

"Ae hairst afore the Sherra-moor —
I mind 't as weel 's yestreen,
I was a gilpey then, I 'm sure
I was na past fifteen:
The simmer had been cauld and wat,
And stuff was unco green;
And aye a rantin' kirn we gat,
And just on Halloween
It fell that night.

"Our stibble-rig was Rab M'Graen,
A clever, sturdy fallow:
His sin gat Eppie Sim wi' wean,
That lived in Achmacalla:
He gat hemp-seed, I mind it weel,
And he made unco light o' 't;
But mony a day was by himsel',
He was sae sairly frighted
That very night."

Then up gat fechtin' Jamie Fleck,
And he swore by his conscience,
That he could saw hemp-seed a peck;
For it was a' but nonsense.
The auld guidman raught down the pock,
And out a handfu' gied him;
Syne bad him slip frae 'mang the folk,
Some time when nae ane see'd him,
And try 't that night.

He marches through amang the stacks,
Though he was something sturtin;
The graip he for a harrow taks,
And haurls at his curpin;
And every now and then he says:
"Hemp-seed, I saw thee,
And her that is to be my lass,
Come after me, and draw thee
As fast this night."

He whistled up Lord Lennox' march,
To keep his courage cheery;
Although his hair began to arch,
He was sae fley'd and eerie:
Till presently he hears a squeak,
And then a grane and gruntle;
He by his shouther ga'e a keek,
And tumbled wi' a wintle
Out-owre that night.

He roared a horrid murder-shout,
In dreadfu' desperation!
And young and auld cam rinnin' out,

And hear the sad narration:
He swore 't was hilchin Jean M'Craw,
Or crouchie Merran Humphie,
Till, stop — she trotted through them a' —
And wha was it but Grumphie
Asteer that night!

Meg fain wad to the barn hae gaen,
To win three wechts o' naething;
But for to meet the deil her lane,
She pat but little faith in:
She gies the herd a pickle nits,
And twa red-cheekit apples,
To watch, while for the barn she sets,
In hopes to see Tam Kipples
That very night.

She turns the key wi' canny thraw,
And owre the threshold ventures;
But first on Sawny gies a ca',
Syne bauldly in she enters:
A ratton rattled up the wa',
And she cried, "L—, preserve her!"
And ran through midden-hole and a',
And prayed wi' zeal and fervour,
Fu' fast that night.

They hoy't out Will, wi' sair advice;
They hecht him some fine braw ane;
It chanced, the stack he faddom't thrice,
Was timmer-propt for thrawin';
He taks a swirly auld moss oak
For some black, grousome carlin;

And loot a winze, and drew a stroke,
Till skin in blypes cam haurlin'
Aff's nieves that night.

A wanton widow Leezie was,
As canty as a kittlin;
But, och! that night, amang the shaws,
She got a fearfu' settlin'!
She through the whins, and by the cairn,
And owre the hill gaed scrieven,
Where three lairds' lands meet at a burn,
To dip her left sark-sleeve in,
Was bent that night.

Whyles owre a linn the burnie plays,
As through the glen it wimpl't;
Whyles round a rocky scaur it strays;
Whyles in a wiel it dimpl't;
Whyles glittered to the nightly rays,
Wi' bickering, dancing dazzle;
Whyles cookit underneath the braes,
Below the spreading hazel,
Unseen that night.

Amang the brackens, on the brae,
Between her and the moon,
The deil, or else an outler quey,
Gat up and gae a croon:
Poor Leezie's heart maist lap the hool;
Near lav'rock-height she jumpit,
But mist a fit, and in the pool
Out-owre the lugs she plumpit,
Wi' a plunge that night.

In order, on the clean hearth-stane,
The luggies three are ranged
And every time great care is ta'en
To see them duly changed:
Auld Uncle John, wha wedlock's joys
Sin' Mar's year did desire,
Because he gat the toom dish thrice
He heaved them on the fire
In wrath that night.

Wi' merry sangs, and friendly cracks,
I wat they did na weary;
And unco tales, and funny jokes,
Their sports were cheap and cheery;
Till buttered so'ns, wi' fragrant lunt,
Set a' their gabs a-steerin';
Syne, wi' a social glass o' strunt,
They parted aff careerin'
Fu' blithe that night.

SECOND EPISTLE TO DAVIE,

A BROTHER POET.

AULD NEIBOR,

I'M three times doubly o'er your debtor,
For your auld-farrant, frien'ly letter;
Though I maun say't, I doubt ye flatter,
Ye speak sae fair:
For my puir, silly, rhymin' clatter
Some less maun sair.

Hale be your heart, hale be your fiddle;
Lang may your elbock jink and diddle,
To cheer you through the weary widdle
O' war'ly cares,
Till bairns' bairns kindly cuddle
Your auld gray hairs.

But, Davie lad, I 'm red ye 're glaikit;
I 'm tauld the Muse ye hae negleckit;
And gif it 's sae, ye sud be licket,
Until ye fyke;
Sic hauns as you sud ne'er be faiket,
Be hain't wha like.

For me, I 'm on Parnassus' brink,
Rivin' the words to gar them clink;
Whyles daez't wi' love, whyles daez't wi' drink,
Wi' jads or masons;
And whyles, but aye owre late, I think,
Braw sober lessons.

Of a' the thoughtless sons o' man,
Commen' me to the bardie clan;
Except it be some idle plan
O' rhymin' clink,
The devil-hae 't (that I sud ban !)
They ever think.

Nae thought, nae view, nae scheme o' livin,
Nae cares to gie us joy or grievin';
But just the pouchie put the nieve in,
And while ought 's there,

Then hiltie skiltie, we gae scrievin',
And fash nae mair.

Leeze me on rhyme! it 's aye a treasure,
My chief, amaist my only pleasure,
At hame, a-fiel', at wark, or leisure;
The Muse, poor hizzie!
Though rough and raploch be her measure,
She 's seldom lazy.

Haud to the Muse, my dainty Davie:
The warl' may play you monie a shavie;
But for the Muse, she 'll never leave ye,
Though e'er sae puir,
Na, even though limpin' wi' the spavie
Frae door to door.

THE BRAES O' BALLOCHMYLE.

THE Catrine woods were yellow seen,
The flowers decayed on Catrine lea,
Nae lav'rock sang on hillock green,
But Nature sickened on the ee.
Through faded groves Maria sang,
Hersel' in beauty's bloom the while,
And aye the wild-wood echoes rang,
Fareweel the Braes o' Ballochmyle!

Low in your wintry beds, ye flowers,
Again ye 'll flourish fresh and fair;

Ye birdies dumb, in with'ring bowers,
Again ye 'll charm the vocal air.
But here, alas! for me nae mair
Shall birdie charm, or flow'ret smile;
Fareweel the bonnie banks of Ayr,
Fareweel, fareweel! sweet Ballochmyle!

MAN WAS MADE TO MOURN.

A DIRGE.

WHEN chill November's surly blast
Made fields and forests bare,
One evening, as I wandered forth
Along the banks of Ayr,
I spied a man whose aged step
Seemed weary, worn with care;
His face was furrowed o'er with years,
And hoary was his hair.

"Young stranger, whither wanderest thou?"
Began the reverend sage:
"Does thirst of wealth thy step constrain,
Or youthful pleasures rage!
Or haply, prest with cares and woes,
Too soon thou hast began
To wander forth, with me, to mourn
The miseries of man.

"The sun that overhangs yon moors,
Outspreading far and wide,

Where hundreds labour to support
A haughty lordling's pride:
I 've seen yon weary winter-sun
Twice forty times return,
And every time has added proofs
That man was made to mourn.

" Oh, man! while in thy early years,
How prodigal of time;
Misspending all thy precious hours,
Thy glorious youthful prime!
Alternate follies take the sway;
Licentious passions burn;
Which tenfold force gives Nature's law,
That man was made to mourn.

" Look not alone on youthful prime,
Or manhood's active might;
Man then is useful to his kind,
Supported is his right:
But see him on the edge of life,
With cares and sorrows worn;
Then Age and Want—oh ill-matched pair!—
Shew man was made to mourn.

" A few seem favourites of fate,
In Pleasure's lap carest;
Yet think not all the rich and great
Are likewise truly blest.
But, oh! what crowds in every land,
All wretched and forlorn!
Through weary life this lesson learn—
That man was made to mourn.

"Many and sharp the numerous ills
Inwoven with our frame!
More pointed still we make ourselves
Regret, remorse, and shame;
And man, — whose heaven-erected face
The smiles of love adorn, —
Man's inhumanity to man
Makes countless thousands mourn!

"See yonder poor, o'erlaboured wight,
So abject, mean, and vile,
Who begs a brother of the earth
To give him leave to toil;
And see his lordly fellow-worm
The poor petition spurn,
Unmindful, though a weeping wife
And helpless offspring mourn.

"If I 'm designed yon lordling's slave —
By Nature's law designed —
Why was an independent wish
E'er planted in my mind?
If not, why am I subject to
His cruelty or scorn?
Or why has man the will and power
To make his fellow mourn?

"Yet let not this too much, my son,
Disturb thy youthful breast;
This partial view of human-kind
Is surely not the last!
The poor, oppressed, honest man,
Had never, sure, been born,

Had there not been some recompense
To comfort those that mourn!

"Oh, Death! the poor man's dearest friend—
The kindest and the best!
Welcome the hour, my aged limbs
Are laid with thee at rest!
The great, the wealthy, fear thy blow,
From pomp and pleasure torn!
But, oh! a blest relief to those
That weary-laden mourn!"

THE COTTER'S SATURDAY NIGHT.

INSCRIBED TO ROBERT AIKEN, ESQ.

"Let not ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys and destiny obscure;
Nor grandeur hear, with a disdainful smile,
The short and simple annals of the poor."—GRAY.

MY loved, my honoured, much-respected friend!
No mercenary bard his homage pays;
With honest pride, I scorn each selfish end;
My dearest meed, a friend's esteem and praise.
To you I sing, in simple Scottish lays,
The lowly train in life's sequestered scene;
The native feelings strong, the guileless ways;
What Aiken in a cottage would have been;
Ah! though his worth unknown, far happier there, I ween!

November chill blaws loud wi' angry sugh ;
The short'ning winter-day is near a close ;
The miry beasts retreating frae the pleugh,
The black'ning trains o' craws to their repose :
The toil-worn cotter frae his labour goes, —
This night his weekly moil is at an end, —
Collects his spades, his mattocks, and his hoes,
Hoping the morn in ease and rest to spend,
And weary, o'er the moor, his course does hameward bend.

At length his lonely cot appears in view,
Beneath the shelter of an aged tree ;
Th' expectant wee things, toddlin', stacher through
To meet their dad, wi' flichterin' noise and glee.
His wee bit ingle, blinking bonnily,
His clean hearthstane, his thriftie wifie's smile,
The lisping infant prattling on his knee,
Does a' his weary kiaugh and care beguile,
And makes him quite forget his labour and his toil.

Belyve, the elder bairns come drapping in,
At service out, amang the farmers roun' :
Some ca' the pleugh, some herd, some tentie rin
A cannie errand to a neibor town :
Their eldest hope, their Jenny, woman grown,
In youthfu' bloom, love sparkling in her e'e,
Comes hame, perhaps to shew a braw new gown,

Or deposit her sair-won penny-fee, .
To help her parents dear, if they in hardship be.

With joy unfeigned, brothers and sisters meet,
And each for other's weelfare kindly spiers:
The social hours, swift-winged, unnoticed fleet;
Each tells the uncos that he sees or hears;
The parents, partial, eye their hopeful years;
Anticipation forward points the view.
The mother, wi' her needle and her shears,
Gars auld claes look amaist as weel 's the new —
The father mixes a' wi' admonition due.

Their master's and their mistress's command,
The younkers a' are warnèd to obey;
And mind their labours wi' an eydent hand,
And ne'er, though out o' sight, to jauk or play:
"And oh! be sure to fear the Lord alway!
And mind your duty, duly, morn and night!
Lest in temptation's path ye gang astray,
Implore His counsel and assisting might:
They never sought in vain that sought the Lord aright!"

But, hark! a rap comes gently to the door;
Jenny, wha kens the meaning o' the same,
Tells how a neibor lad cam o'er the moor,
To do some errands, and convoy her hame.
The wily mother sees the conscious flame
Sparkle in Jenny's e'e, and flush her cheek;
With heart-struck anxious care inquires his name,

While Jenny hafflins is afraid to speak;
Weel pleased the mother hears it 's nae wild, worthless rake.

Wi' kindly welcome, Jenny brings him ben;
A strappin' youth; he taks the mother's eye;
Blithe Jenny sees the visit 's no ill-ta'en;
The father cracks of horses, pleughs, and kye.
The youngster's artless heart o'erflows wi' joy,
But blate and lathefu', scarce can weel behave;
The mother, wi' a woman's wiles, can spy
What makes the youth sae bashfu' and sae grave:
Weel pleased to think her bairn 's respected like the lave.

Oh happy love! — where love like this is found!
Oh heartfelt raptures! — bliss beyond compare!
I 've pacèd much this weary, mortal round,
And sage experience bids me this declare: —
If Heaven a draught of heavenly pleasure spare,
One cordial in this melancholy vale,
'T is when a youthful, loving, modest pair
In other's arms breathe out the tender tale,
Beneath the milk-white thorn that scents the evening gale.

Is there, in human form, that bears a heart,
A wretch, a villain, lost to love and truth,
That can, with studied, sly, ensnaring art,

Betray sweet Jenny's unsuspecting youth?
Curse on his perjur'd arts! dissembling smooth!
Are honour, virtue, conscience, all exiled?
Is there no pity, no relenting ruth,
Points to the parents fondling o'er their child?
Then paints the ruined maid, and their distraction wild?

But now the supper crowns their simple board,—
The halesome parritch, chief of Scotia's food;
The soupe their only hawkie does afford,
That 'yont the hallan snugly chows her cood:
The dame brings forth, in complimental mood,
To grace the lad, her weel-hain'd kebbuck, fell,
And aft he 's prest, and aft he ca's it guid;
The frugal wifie, garrulous, will tell,
How 't was a towmond auld, sin' lint was i' the bell.

The cheerfu' supper done, wi' serious face,
They, round the ingle, form a circle wide;
The sire turns o'er, with patriarchal grace,
The big ha' Bible, ance his father's pride;
His bonnet rev'rently is laid aside,
His lyart haffets wearing thin and bare;
Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide,
He wales a portion with judicious care;
And "Let us worship GOD!" he says, with solemn air.

They chant their artless notes in simple guise;
They tune their hearts, by far the noblest aim.
Perhaps *Dundee's* wild-warbling measures rise,
Or plaintive *Martyrs*, worthy of the name,
Or noble *Elgin* beets the heavenward flame,
The sweetest far of Scotia's holy lays:
Compared with these, Italian trills are tame;
The tickled ear no heartfelt raptures raise;
Nae unison hae they with our Creator's praise.

The priest-like father reads the sacred page —
How Abram was the friend of GOD on high;
Or, Moses bade eternal warfare wage
With Amalek's ungracious progeny;
Or how the royal bard did groaning lie
Beneath the stroke of Heaven's avenging ire;
Or Job's pathetic plaint, and wailing cry;
Or rapt Isaiah's wild, seraphic fire;
Or other holy seers that tune the sacred lyre.

Perhaps the Christian volume is the theme —
How guiltless blood for guilty man was shed:
How HE, who bore in heaven the second name,
Had not on earth whereon to lay his head:
How his first followers and servants sped:
The precepts sage they wrote to many a land:
How he, who lone in Patmos banishèd,
Saw in the sun a mighty angel stand,
And heard great Bab'lon's doom pronounced by Heaven's command.

Then kneeling down to HEAVEN'S ETERNAL KING,

The saint, the father, and the husband prays:
Hope "springs exulting on triumphant wing,"
That thus they all shall meet in future days:
There ever bask in uncreated rays,
No more to sigh, or shed the bitter tear,
Together hymning their Creator's praise,
In such society, yet still more dear;
While circling Time moves round in an eternal sphere.

Compared with this, how poor Religion's pride,
In all the pomp of method and of art,
When men display to congregations wide,
Devotion's every grace, except the heart!
The Power, incensed, the pageant will desert,
The pompous strain, the sacerdotal stole;
But, haply, in some cottage far apart,
May hear, well pleased, the language of the soul;
And in His book of life the inmates poor enrol.

Then homeward all take off their several way;
The youngling cottagers retire to rest:
The parent-pair their secret homage pay,
And proffer up to Heaven the warm request,
That He, who stills the raven's clamorous nest,
And decks the lily fair in flowery pride,
Would, in the way His wisdom sees the best,
For them and for their little ones provide;
But, chiefly, in their hearts with grace divine preside.

From scenes like these old Scotia's grandeur springs,
That makes her loved at home, revered abroad:
Princes and lords are but the breath of kings,
"An honest man 's the noblest work of God;"
And certes, in fair Virtue's heavenly road,
The cottage leaves the palace far behind:
What is a lordling's pomp? — a cumbrous load,
Disguising oft the wretch of human kind,
Studied in arts of hell, in wickedness refined!

Oh Scotia! my dear, my native soil!
For whom my warmest wish to Heaven is sent,
Long may thy hardy sons of rustic toil
Be blest with health, and peace, and sweet content!
And oh! may Heaven their simple lives prevent
From luxury's contagion, weak and vile!
Then, howe'er crowns and coronets be rent,
A virtuous populace may rise the while,
And stand a wall of fire around their much-loved isle.

Oh Thou! who poured the patriotic tide,
That streamed through Wallace's undaunted heart,
Who dared to nobly stem tyrannic pride,
Or nobly die, the second glorious part,
(The patriot's God, peculiarly thou art,

His friend, inspirer, guardian, and reward !)
Oh never, never, Scotia's realm desert ;
But still the patriot, and the patriot bard,
In bright succession raise, her ornament and guard !

ADDRESS TO THE DEIL.

"Oh prince, oh chief of many throned powers,
That led th' embattled seraphim to war ! " — MILTON.

OH thou ! whatever title suit thee,
Auld Hornie, Satan, Nick, or Clootie,
Wha in yon cavern grim and sootie,
Closed under hatches,
Spairges about the brunstane cootie,
To scaud poor wretches !

Hear me, auld Hangie, for a wee,
And let poor d—d bodies be ;
I 'm sure sma' pleasure it can gie,
E'en to a deil,
To skelp and scaud poor dogs like me,
And hear us squeel !

Great is thy power, and great thy fame ;
Far kenned and noted is thy name ;
And though yon lowin' heugh 's thy hame,
Thou travels far ;
And, faith ! thou 's neither lag nor lame,
Nor blate nor scaur.

Whyles, ranging like a roaring lion,
For prey a' holes and corners tryin' ;

Whyles on the strong-winged tempest flyin',
Tirlin' the kirks;
Whyles in the human bosom pryin',
Unseen thou lurks.

I 've heard my reverend grannie say,
In lanely glens ye like to stray;
Or where auld ruined castles gray
Nod to the moon,
Ye fright the nightly wanderer's way
Wi' eldritch croon.

When twilight did my grannie summon,
To say her prayers, douce honest woman!
Aft yont the dike she 's heard you bummin',
Wi' eerie drone;
Or, rustlin', through the boortrees comin',
Wi' heavy groan.

Ae dreary, windy, winter-night,
The stars shot down wi' sklentin' light,
Wi' you, mysel', I gat a fright
Ayont the lough;
Ye, like a rash-bush, stood in sight,
Wi' waving sough.

The cudgel in my nieve did shake,
Each bristled hair stood like a stake,
When wi' an eldritch, stoor quaick — quaick —
Amang the springs,
Awa' ye squattered, like a drake,
On whistling wings.

Let warlocks grim, and withered hags,
Tell how wi' you, on ragweed nags,
They skim the muirs and dizzy crags,
Wi' wicked speed;
And in kirk-yards renew their leagues
Owre howkit dead.

Thence countra wives, wi' toil and pain,
May plunge and plunge the kirn in vain;
For, oh! the yellow treasure 's ta'en
By witching skill;
And dawtit, twal-pint Hawkie 's gaen
As yell 's the bill.

Thence mystic knots mak great abuse,
On young guidmen, fond, keen, and crouse,
When the best wark-lume i' the house,
By cantrip wit,
Is instant made no worth a louse,
Just at the bit.

When thowes dissolve the snawy hoord,
And float the jinglin' icy boord,
Then water-kelpies haunt the foord,
By your direction;
And 'nighted travellers are allured
To their destruction.

And aft your moss-traversing spunkies
Decoy the wight that late and drunk is:
The bleezin', curst, mischievous monkeys
Delude his eyes,

Till in some miry slough he sunk is,
Ne'er mair to rise.

When mason's mystic word and grip,
In storms and tempests raise you up,
Some cock or cat your rage maun stop,
Or, strange to tell!
The youngest brother ye wad whip
Aff straught to h—!

Lang syne, in Eden's bonny yard,
When youthfu' lovers first were paired,
And all the soul of love they shared,
The raptured hour,
Sweet on the fragrant flowery swaird,
In shady bower,[1] —

Then you, ye auld sneck-drawing dog!
Ye came to Paradise incog.
And played on man a cursed brogue,
(Black be your fa'!)
And gied the infant warld a shog,
'Maist ruined a'.

D'ye mind that day, when in a bizz,
Wi' reekit duds, and reestit gizz,
Ye did present your smootie phiz
'Mang better folk,

[1] This verse ran originally as follows: —

Lang syne, in Eden's happy scene,
When strappin' Adam's days were green,
And Eve was like my bonnie Jean,
My dearest part.
A dancin', sweet, young handsome quean,
O' guileless heart.

And sklented on the man of Uzz
Your spitefu' joke ?

And how ye gat him i' your thrall,
And brak him out o' house and hall,
While scabs and blotches did him gall,
Wi' bitter claw,
And lows'd his ill-tongued, wicked scawl,
Was warst ava ?

But a' your doings to rehearse,
Your wily snares and fechtin' fierce,
Sin' that day Michael did you pierce,
Down to this time,
Wad ding a Lallan tongue, or Erse,
In prose or rhyme.

And now, auld Cloots, I ken ye 're thinkin',
A certain bardie's rantin', drinkin',
Some luckless hour will send him linkin'
To your black pit;
But, faith ! he 'll turn a corner jinkin',
And cheat you yet.

But fare you weel, auld Nickie-ben !
O wad ye tak a thought and men' !
Ye aiblins might — I dinna ken —
Still hae a stake —
I 'm wae to think upo' yon den,
Even for your sake !

ON JOHN DOVE,

INNKEEPER, MAUCHLINE.

HERE lies Johnny Pigeon;
What was his religion?
Wha e'er desires to ken,
To some other warl'
Maun follow the carl,
For here Johnny Pigeon had nane!

Strong ale was ablution,
Small beer persecution,
A dram was *memento mori*;
But a full-flowing bowl
Was the joy of his soul,
And port was celestial glory.

THE JOLLY BEGGARS:

A CANTATA.

RECITATIVO.

WHEN lyart leaves bestrew the yird,
Or wavering like the baukie-bird,
Bedim cauld Boreas' blast;
When hailstanes drive wi' bitter skyte
And infant frosts begin to bite,
In hoary cranreuch drest;
Ae night at e'en a merry core
O' randie, gangrel bodies,

In Poosie Nansie's held the splore,
To drink their orra duddies:
Wi' quaffing and laughing
They ranted and they sang;
Wi' jumping and thumping,
The vera girdle rang.

First, niest the fire, in auld red rags,
Ane sat, weel braced wi' mealy bags,
And knapsack a' in order;
His doxy lay within his arm,
Wi' usquebae and blankets warm —
She blinket on her sodger:
And aye he gies the tozie drab
The tither skelpin' kiss,
While she held up her greedy gab
Just like an aumos dish.
Ilk smack still, did crack still,
Just like a cadger's whip,
Then staggering and swaggering,
He roared this ditty up.

AIR.

TUNE — *Soldiers' Joy.*

I am a son of Mars, who have been in many wars,
And shew my cuts and scars wherever I come;
This here was for a wench, and that other in a trench,
When welcoming the French at the sound of the drum.
Lal de daudle, etc.

My 'prenticeship I past where my leader breathed
his last,
When the bloody die was cast on the heights of
Abram;
I served out my trade when the gallant game was
played,
And the Morro low was laid at the sound of the
drum.
Lal de daudle, etc.

I lastly was with Curtis, among the floating-bat-
teries,
And there I left for witness an arm and a limb;
Yet let my country need me, with Elliot to head
me,
I'd clatter on my stumps at the sound of a drum.
Lal de daudle, etc.

And now though I must beg, with a wooden arm
and leg,
And many a tattered rag hanging over my bum,
I'm as happy with my wallet, my bottle and my
callet,
As when I used in scarlet to follow a drum.
Lal de daudle, etc.

What though with hoary locks I must stand the
winter shocks,
Beneath the woods and rocks oftentimes for a
home,
When the t'other bag I sell, and the t'other bot-
tle tell,

I could meet a troop of h— at the sound of a drum.

Lal de daudle, etc.

RECITATIVO.

He ended; and the kebars sheuk,
Aboon the chorus roar;
While frighted rattons backward leuk,
And seek the benmost bore.
A fairy fiddler frae the neuk,
He skirlèd out "Encore!"
But up arose the martial chuck,
And laid the loud uproar.

AIR.

TUNE—*Soldier Laddie.*

I once was a maid, though I cannot tell when,
And still my delight is in proper young men;
Some one of a troop of dragoons was my daddie,
No wonder I 'm fond of a sodger laddie.
Sing, Lal de lal, etc.

The first of my loves was a swaggering blade,
To rattle the thundering drum was his trade;
His leg was so tight, and his cheek was so ruddy,
Transported I was with my sodger laddie.
Sing, Lal de lal, etc.

But the godly old chaplain left him in the lurch,
The sword I forsook for the sake of the church;

He ventured the soul, and I risked the body —
'T was then I proved false to my sodger laddie.
Sing, Lal de lal, etc.

Full soon I grew sick of my sanctified sot,
The regiment at large for a husband I got;
From the gilded spontoon to the fife I was ready,
I asked no more but a sodger laddie.
Sing, Lal de lal, etc.

But the peace it reduced me to beg in despair,
Till I met my old boy at a Cunningham fair;
His rags regimental they fluttered so gaudy,
My heart it rejoiced at a sodger laddie.
Sing, Lal de lal, etc.

And now I have lived — I know not how long,
And still I can join in a cup and a song;
But whilst with both hands I can hold the glass steady,
Here 's to thee, my hero, my sodger laddie.
Sing, Lal de lal, etc.

RECITATIVO.

Poor Merry Andrew in the neuk,
Sat guzzling wi' a tinkler hizzie:
They mind 't na wha the chorus teuk,
Between themselves they were sae busy.
At length, wi' drink and courting dizzy,
He stoitered up and made a face;
Then turned, and laid a smack on Grizzie,
Syne tuned his pipes wi' grave grimace.

AIR.

TUNE — *Auld Sir Symon.*

Sir Wisdom 's a fool when he 's fou,
  Sir Knave is a fool in a session ;
He 's there but a 'prentice I trow,
  But I am a fool by profession.

My grannie she bought me a beuk,
  And I held awa' to the school ;
I fear I my talent misteuk,
  But what will ye hae of a fool ?

For drink I would venture my neck,
  A hizzie 's the half o' my craft,
But what could ye other expect
  Of ane that 's avowedly daft ?

I ance was tied up like a stirk,
  For civilly swearing and quaffin' ;
I ance was abused in the kirk,
  For touzling a lass i' my daffin.

Poor Andrew that tumbles for sport,
  Let naebody name wi' a jeer ;
There 's even, I 'm tauld, i' the court
  A tumbler ca'd the Premier.

Observed ye, yon reverend lad
  Maks faces to tickle the mob ?
He rails at our mountebank squad —
  It 's rivalship just i' the job.

And now my conclusion I 'll tell,
For faith I 'm confoundedly dry;
The chiel that 's a fool for himsel',
Guid L—! he 's far dafter than I.

RECITATIVO.

Then niest outspak a raucle carlin,
Wha kent fu' weel to cleek the sterling,
For monie a pursie she had hooked,
And had in monie a well been ducked.
Her dove had been a Highland laddie,
But weary fa' the waefu' woodie!
Wi' sighs and sobs she thus began
To wail her braw John Highlandman.

AIR.

TUNE — *O an' ye were dead, Guidman.*

A Highland lad my love was born,
The Lawland laws he held in scorn,
But he still was faithfu' to his clan,
My gallant braw John Highlandman.

CHORUS.

Sing, hey my braw John Highlandman!
Sing, ho my braw John Highlandman!
There 's not a lad in a' the lan'
Was match for my John Highlandman.

With his philabeg and tartan plaid,
And guid claymore down by his side,

The ladies' hearts he did trepan,
My gallant braw John Highlandman.
Sing, hey, etc.

We rangèd a' from Tweed to Spey,
And lived like lords and ladies gay;
For a Lawland face he fearèd none,
My gallant braw John Highlandman.
Sing, hey, etc.

They banished him beyond the sea,
But ere the bud was on the tree,
Adown my cheeks the pearls ran,
Embracing my John Highlandman.
Sing, hey, etc.

But, oh! they catched him at the last,
And bound him in a dungeon fast;
My curse upon them every one,
They 've hanged my braw John Highlandman.
Sing, hey, etc.

And now a widow, I must mourn
The pleasures that will ne'er return;
No comfort but a hearty can,
When I think on John Highlandman.
Sing, hey, etc.

RECITATIVO.

A pigmy scraper, wi' his fiddle,
Wha used at trysts and fairs to driddle,

Her strappin' limb and gaucy middle
(He reached na higher)
Had holed his heartie like a riddle,
And blawn 't on fire.

Wi' hand on haunch, and upward e'e,
He crooned his gamut, one, two, three,
Then in an arioso key,
The wee Apollo
Set off wi' allegretto glee
His giga solo.

AIR.

TUNE — *Whistle owre the lave o' 't.*

Let me ryke up to dight that tear,
And go wi' me and be my dear,
And then your every care and fear
May whistle owre the lave o' 't.

CHORUS.

I am a fiddler to my trade,
And a' the tunes that e'er I played,
The sweetest still to wife or maid,
Was whistle owre the lave o' 't.

At kirns and weddings we 'se be there,
And oh! sae nicely 's we will fare;
We 'll bouse about till Daddy Care
Sings whistle owre the lave o' 't.
I am, etc.

Sae merrily the banes we 'll pyke,
And sun oursel's about the dike,
And at our leisure, when ye like,
We 'll whistle owre the lave o' 't
I am, etc.

But bless me wi' your heaven o' charms,
And while I kittle hair on thairms,
Hunger, cauld, and a' sic harms,
May whistle owre the lave o' 't.
I am, etc.

RECITATIVO.

Her charms had struck a sturdy caird,
As weel as poor gut-scraper;
He taks the fiddler by the beard,
And draws a rusty rapier.

He swore by a' was swearing worth,
To speet him like a pliver,
Unless he wad from that time forth
Relinquish her for ever.

Wi' ghastly e'e, poor Tweedle-dee
Upon his hunkers bended,
And prayed for grace wi' ruefu' face,
And sae the quarrel ended.

But though his little heart did grieve
When round the tinkler prest her,
He feigned to snirtle in his sleeve,
When thus the caird addressed her:

AIR.

TUNE — *Clout the Caudron.*

My bonny lass, I work in brass,
A tinkler is my station.
I 've travelled round all Christian ground
In this my occupation:
I 've ta'en the gold, I 've been enrolled
In many a noble squadron:
But vain they searched, when off I marched
To go and clout the caudron.
I 've ta'en the gold, etc.

Despise that shrimp, that withered imp,
Wi' a' his noise and cap'rin',
And tak a share wi' those that bear
The budget and the apron.
And by that stoup, my faith and houp,
And by that dear Kilbagie,
If e'er you want, or meet wi' scant,
May I ne'er weet my craigie.
And by that stoup, etc.

RECITATIVO.

The caird prevailed — the unblushing fair
In his embraces sunk,
Partly wi' love o'ercome sae sair,
And partly she was drunk.
Sir Violino, with an air
That shewed a man of spunk,
Wished unison between the pair,
And made the bottle clunk
To their health that night.

But hurchin Cupid shot a shaft
That played a dame a shavie,
The fiddler raked her fore and aft,
Ahint the chicken cavie.
Her lord, a wight o' Homer's craft,
Though limping wi' the spavie,
He hirpled up, and lap like daft,
And shored them Dainty Davie
O' boot that night.

He was a care-defying blade
As ever Bacchus listed,
Though Fortune sair upon him laid,
His heart she ever missed it.
He had nae wish but — to be glad,
Nor want but — when he thirsted;
He hated nought but — to be sad,
And thus the Muse suggested
His sang that night.

AIR.

TUNE — *For a' that, and a' that.*

I am a bard of no regard
Wi' gentle folks, and a' that;
But Homer-like, the glowrin' byke,
Frae town to town I draw that.

CHORUS.

For a' that, and a' that,
And twice as muckle 's a' that,
I 've lost but ane, I 've twa behin',
I 've wife eneugh for a' that.

I never drank the Muses' stank,
Castalia's burn, and a' that;
But there it streams, and richly reams,
My Helicon I ca' that,
For a' that, etc.

Great love I bear to a' the fair,
Their humble slave, and a' that;
But lordly will, I hold it still
A mortal sin to thraw that.
For a' that, etc.

In raptures sweet, this hour we meet,
Wi' mutual love, and a' that;
But for how lang the flie may stang,
Let inclination law that.
For a' that, etc.

Their tricks and craft have put me daft,
They 've ta'en me in, and a' that;
But clear your decks, and here 's the sex;
I like the jads for a' that.

CHORUS.

For a' that, and a' that,
And twice as muckle 's a' that;
My dearest bluid, to do them guid,
They 're welcome till't for a' that.

RECITATIVO.

So sang the bard — and Nansie's wa's
Shook with a thunder of applause,

Re-echoed from each mouth:
They toomed their pokes, and pawned their duds,
They scarcely left to co'er their fuds,
To quench their lowin' drouth.
Then owre again, the jovial thrang
The poet did request,
To loose his pack and wale a sang,
A ballad o' the best;
He rising, rejoicing,
Between his twa Deborahs,
Looks round him, and found them
Impatient for the chorus.

AIR.

TUNE — *Jolly Mortals, fill your Glasses.*

See the smoking bowl before us,
Mark our jovial ragged ring!
Round and round take up the chorus,
And in raptures let us sing.

CHORUS.

A fig for those by law protected!
Liberty 's a glorious feast!
Courts for cowards were erected,
Churches built to please the priest.

What is title? what is treasure?
What is reputation's care?
If we lead a life of pleasure,
'T is no matter how or where!
A fig, etc.

With the ready trick and fable,
Round we wander all the day;
And at night, in barn or stable,
Hug our doxies on the hay.
A fig, etc.

Does the train-attended carriage
Through the country lighter rove?
Does the sober bed of marriage
Witness brighter scenes of love?
A fig, etc.

Life is all a variorum,
We regard not how it goes;
Let them cant about decorum
Who have characters to lose.
A fig, etc.

Here 's to budgets, bags, and wallets!
Here 's to all the wandering train!
Here 's our ragged brats and callets!
One and all cry out — Amen!

A fig for those by law protected!
Liberty 's a glorious feast!
Courts for cowards were erected,
Churches built to please the priest.

TO JAMES SMITH.

"Friendship! mysterious cement of the soul!
Sweet'ner of life, and solder of society!
I owe thee much!" — BLAIR.

DEAR Smith, the slee'est, paukie thief
That e'er attempted stealth or rief,
Ye surely hae some warlock-breef
Owre human hearts;
For ne'er a bosom yet was prief
Against your arts.

For me, I swear by sun and moon,
And every star that blinks aboon,
Ye 've cost me twenty pair o' shoon
Just gaun to see you;
And every ither pair that 's done,
Mair ta'en I 'm wi' you.

That auld capricious carlin, Nature,
To mak amends for scrimpet stature,
She 's turned you aff, a human creature
On her first plan;
And in her freaks, on every feature
She 's wrote, the Man.

Just now I 've ta'en the fit o' rhyme,
My barmie noddle 's working prime,
My fancy yerkit up sublime
Wi' hasty summon:
Hae ye a leisure moment's time,
To hear what 's comin'?

Some rhyme a neighbour's name to lash;
Some rhyme (vain thought!) for needfu' cash;
Some rhyme to court the country clash,
And raise a din;
For me, an aim I never fash —
I rhyme for fun.

The star that rules my luckless lot,
Has fated me the russet coat,
And d—d my fortune to the groat;
But in requit,
Has blest me wi' a random shot
O' country wit.

This while my notion 's ta'en a sklent,
To try my fate in guid black prent;
But still the mair I 'm that way bent,
Something cries "Hoolie!
I red you, honest man, tak tent!
Ye 'll shaw your folly.

"There 's ither poets much your betters,
Far seen in Greek, deep men o' letters,
Hae thought they had insured their debtors
A' future ages;
Now moths deform, in shapeless tatters,
Their unknown pages."

Then farewell hopes o' laurel-boughs,
To garland my poetic brows!
Henceforth I 'll rove where busy ploughs
Are whistling thrang,

And teach the lanely heights and howes
My rustic sang.

I 'll wander on, with tentless heed
How never-halting moments speed,
Till fate shall snap the brittle thread ;
Then, all unknown,
I 'll lay me with the inglorious dead,
Forgot and gone !

But why o' death begin a tale ?
Just now we 're living sound and hale :
Then top and maintop crowd the sail,
Heave Care o'er side !
And large before Enjoyment's gale,
Let 's tak the tide.

This life, sae far 's I understand,
Is a' enchanted fairy-land,
Where Pleasure is the magic wand,
That, wielded right,
Maks hours like minutes, hand in hand,
Dance by fu' light.

The magic wand then let us wield ;
For, ance that five-and-forty 's speel'd,
See, crazy, weary, joyless eild,
Wi' wrinkled face,
Comes hostin', hirplin' owre the field,
Wi' creepin' pace.

When ance life's day draws near the gloamin',
Then fareweel vacant careless roamin' ;

And fareweel cheerfu' tankards foamin',
And social noise;
And fareweel dear, deluding woman,
The joy of joys!

Oh, Life! how pleasant in thy morning,
Young Fancy's rays the hills adorning!
Cold-pausing Caution's lesson scorning,
We frisk away,
Like school-boys, at the expected warning,
To joy and play.

We wander there, we wander here,
We eye the rose upon the brier,
Unmindful that the thorn is near,
Among the leaves:
And though the puny wound appear,
Short while it grieves.

Some, lucky, find a flowery spot,
For which they never toiled or swat;
They drink the sweet and eat the fat,
But care or pain;
And, haply, eye the barren hut
With high disdain.

With steady aim some fortune chase;
Keen hope does every sinew brace;
Through fair, through foul, they urge the race,
And seize the prey:
Then cannie, in some cozie place,
They close the day.

And others, like your humble servan',
Poor wights! nae rules nor roads observin',
To right or left, eternal swervin',
They zigzag on;
Till curst with age, obscure and starvin',
They aften groan.

Alas! what bitter toil and straining—
But truce with peevish, poor complaining!
Is Fortune's fickle Luna waning?
E'en let her gang!
Beneath what light she has remaining,
Let 's sing our sang.

My pen I here fling to the door,
And kneel, "Ye Powers," and warm implore,
"Though I should wander Terra o'er,
In all her climes,
Grant me but this, I ask no more,
Aye rowth o' rhymes.

"Gie dreeping roasts to country lairds,
Till icicles hing frae their beards;
Gie fine braw claes to fine life-guards,
And maids of honour;
And yill and whisky gie to cairds,
Until they sconner.

"A title, Dempster merits it;
A garter gie to Willie Pitt;
Gie wealth to some be-ledgered cit,
In cent. per cent.;

But give me real, sterling wit,
And I 'm content.

" While ye are pleased to keep me hale,
I 'll sit down o'er my scanty meal,
Be 't water-brose, or muslin-kail,
Wi' cheerfu' face,
As lang 's the Muses dinna fail
To say the grace."

An anxious e'e I never throws
Behint my lug or by my nose ;
I jouk beneath Misfortune's blows
As weel 's I may ;
Sworn foe to Sorrow, Care, and Prose,
I rhyme away.

Oh ye douce folk, that live by rule,
Grave, tideless-blooded, calm and cool,
Compared wi' you — oh fool ! fool ! fool !
How much unlike ;
Your hearts are just a standing-pool,
Your lives a dike !

Nae hairbrained, sentimental traces,
In your unlettered nameless faces !
In arioso trills and graces
Ye never stray,
But gravissimo, solemn basses
Ye hum away.

Ye are sae grave, nae doubt ye 're wise ;
Nae ferly though ye do despise

The hairum-scairum, ram-stam boys,
The rattling squad:
I see you upward cast your eyes —
Ye ken the road.

Whilst I — but I shall haud me there —
Wi' you I 'll scarce gang ony where:
Then, Jamie, I shall say nae mair,
But quat my sang,
Content with you to mak a pair,
Whare'er I gang.

THE VISION.

DUAN FIRST.

THE sun had closed the winter-day,
The curlers quat their roaring play,
And hungered maukin ta'en her way
To kail-yards green,
While faithless snaws ilk step betray
Whare she has been.

The thrasher's weary flingin'-tree
The lee-lang day had tirèd me;
And when the day had closed his e'e,
Far i' the west,
Ben i' the spence, right pensivelie,
I gaed to rest.

There, lanely, by the ingle-cheek,
I sat and eyed the spewing reek,

That filled wi' hoast-provoking smeek
The auld clay biggin';
And heard the restless rattons squeak
About the riggin'.

All in this mottie, misty clime,
I backward mused on wasted time,
How I had spent my youthfu' prime,
And done nae thing,
But stringin' blethers up in rhyme,
For fools to sing.

Had I to guid advice but harkit,
I might, by this, hae led a market,
Or strutted in a bank, and clarkit
My cash-account:
While here, half-mad, half-fed, half-sarkit,
Is a' th' amount.

I started, muttering, blockhead! coof!
And heaved on high my waukit loof,
To swear by a' yon starry roof,
Or some rash aith,
That I henceforth would be rhyme-proof
Till my last breath.

When, click! the string the snick did draw;
And, jee! the door gaed to the wa';
And by my ingle-lowe I saw,
Now bleezin' bright,
A tight, outlandish hizzie, braw,
Come full in sight.

Ye needna doubt I held my whisht;
The infant aith, half-formed, was crusht;
I glowred as eerie 's I 'd been dusht
In some wild glen;
When sweet, like modest Worth, she blusht,
And steppèd ben.

Green, slender, leaf-clad holly-boughs
Were twisted gracefu' round her brows,
I took her for some Scottish Muse,
By that same token,
And come to stop those reckless vows,
Would soon been broken.

A "hairbrained, sentimental trace"
Was strongly markèd in her face;
A wildly-witty, rustic grace
Shone full upon her;
Her eye, even turned on empty space,
Beamed keen with honour.

Down flowed her robe, a tartan sheen,
Till half a leg was scrimply seen;
And such a leg! my bonny Jean [1]
Could only peer it;
Sae straught, sae taper, tight and clean,
Nane else cam near it.

[1] In the first edition, the line stood thus—

"And such a leg! my Bess, I ween."

Indignation at the conduct of Jean induced him to take the compliment from her, and bestow it on another person for whom at the time he entertained an admiration. In the first Edinburgh edition, the indignant feeling having subsided, the line was restored as above.

Her mantle large, of greenish hue,
My gazing wonder chiefly drew;
Deep lights and shades, bold-mingling, threw
A lustre grand;
And seemed to my astonished view
A well-known land.

Here, rivers in the sea were lost;
There, mountains to the skies were tost:
Here, tumbling billows marked the coast
With surging foam;
There, distant shone Art's lofty boast —
The lordly dome.

Here, Doon poured down his far-fetched floods;
There, well-fed Irwine stately thuds:
Auld hermit Ayr staw through his woods,
On to the shore,
And many a lesser torrent scuds
With seeming roar.

Low in a sandy valley spread,
An ancient borough reared her head;
Still, as in Scottish story read,
She boasts a race
To every nobler virtue bred,
And polished grace.

By stately tower or palace fair,
Or ruins pendent in the air,
Bold stems of heroes, here and there,
I could discern;

Some seemed to muse, some seemed to dare,
With feature stern.

My heart did glowing transport feel,
To see a race heroic wheel,
And brandish round the deep-dyed steel
In sturdy blows;
While back-recoiling seemed to reel
Their suthron foes.

His Country's Saviour, mark him well!
Bold Richardton's heroic swell;
The chief on Sark who glorious fell
In high command;
And he whom ruthless fates expel
His native land.

There, where a sceptred Pictish shade
Stalked round his ashes lowly laid,
I marked a martial race, portrayed
In colours strong;
Bold, soldier-featured, undismayed,
They strode along.

Through many a wild romantic grove,
Near many a hermit-fancied cove
(Fit haunts for friendship or for love),
In musing mood,
An aged judge, I saw him rove,
Dispensing good.

With deep-struck reverential awe,
The learnèd sire and son I saw,

To Nature's God and Nature's law
They gave their lore,
This, all its source and end to draw,
That, to adore.

Brydone's brave ward I well could spy,
Beneath old Scotia's smiling eye;
Who called on Fame, low standing by,
To hand him on,
Where many a patriot-name on high,
And hero shone.

DUAN SECOND.

With musing-deep, astonished stare,
I viewed the heavenly-seeming fair;
A whispering throb did witness bear
Of kindred sweet,
When with an elder sister's air
She did me greet.

"All hail, my own inspirèd bard!
In me thy native Muse regard!
Nor longer mourn thy fate is hard,
Thus poorly low!
I come to give thee such reward
As we bestow.

"Know, the great genius of this land
Has many a light, aërial band,
Who, all beneath his high command,
Harmoniously,

As arts or arms they understand,
Their labours ply.

"They Scotia's race among them share;
Some fire the soldier on to dare;
Some rouse the patriot up to bare
Corruption's heart:
Some teach the bard, a darling care,
The tuneful art.

"'Mong swelling floods of reeking gore,
They, ardent, kindling spirits, pour;
Or, 'mid the venal senate's roar,
They, sightless, stand,
To mend the honest patriot-lore,
And grace the hand.

"And when the bard, or hoary sage,
Charm or instruct the future age,
They bind the wild, poetic rage
In energy,
Or point the inconclusive page
Full on the eye.

"Hence Fullarton, the brave and young;
Hence Dempster's zeal-inspirèd [1] tongue;
Hence sweet harmonious Beattie sung
His 'Minstrel lays;'
Or tore, with noble ardour stung,
The sceptic's bays.

[1] In first edition —

"Hence Dempster's truth-prevailing tongue."

" To lower orders are assigned
The humbler ranks of humankind,
The rustic bard, the labouring-hind,
The artisan;
All choose, as various they 're inclined,
The various man.

" When yellow waves the heavy grain,
The threatening storm some strongly rein;
Some teach to meliorate the plain,
With tillage skill;
And some instruct the shepherd-train,
Blithe o'er the hill.

" Some hint the lover's harmless wile;
Some grace the maiden's artless smile;
Some soothe the labourer's weary toil,
For humble gains,
And make his cottage-scenes beguile
His cares and pains.

" Some, bounded to a district-space,
Explore at large man's infant race,
To mark the embryotic trace
Of rustic bard;
And careful note each opening grace,
A guide and guard.

" Of these am I — Coila my name;
And this district as mine I claim,
Where once the Campbells, chiefs of fame,
Held ruling power:

I marked thy embryo tuneful flame,
Thy natal hour.

"With future hope, I oft would gaze,
Fond, on thy little early ways,
Thy rudely-caroled, chiming phrase,
In uncouth rhymes,
Fired at the simple, artless lays
Of other times.

"I saw thee seek the sounding shore,
Delighted with the dashing roar;
Or when the north his fleecy store
Drove through the sky,
I saw grim Nature's visage hoar
Struck thy young eye.

"Or when the deep green-mantled earth
Warm cherished every floweret's birth,
And joy and music pouring forth
In every grove,
I saw thee eye the general mirth
With boundless love.

"When ripened fields, and azure skies,
Called forth the reaper's rustling noise,
I saw thee leave their evening joys,
And lonely stalk,
To vent thy bosom's swelling rise
In pensive walk.

"When youthful love, warm-blushing, strong,
Keen shivering shot thy nerves along,

Those accents, grateful to thy tongue,
Th' adorèd Name,
I taught thee how to pour in song,
To soothe thy flame.

"I saw thy pulse's maddening play,
Wild send thee Pleasure's devious way,
Misled by Fancy's meteor-ray,
By passion driven;
But yet the light that led astray
Was light from Heaven.

"I taught thy manners painting strains,
The loves, the wants of simple swains,
Till now, o'er all my wide domains
Thy fame extends;
And some, the pride of Coila's plains,
Become thy friends.

"Thou canst not learn, nor can I shew,
To paint with Thomson's landscape glow;
Or wake the bosom-melting throe,
With Shenstone's art;
Or pour, with Gray, the moving flow
Warm on the heart.

"Yet, all beneath the unrivalled rose,
The lowly daisy sweetly blows;
Though large the forest's monarch throws
His army shade,
Yet green the juicy hawthorn grows
Adown the glade.

"Then never murmur nor repine;
Strive in thy humble sphere to shine;
And, trust me, not Potosi's mine,
Nor king's regard,
Can give a bliss o'ermatching thine,
A rustic bard.

"To give my counsels all in one —
Thy tuneful flame still careful fan;
Preserve the dignity of man,
With soul erect;
And trust, the universal plan
Will all protect.

"And wear thou this," she solemn said,
And bound the holly round my head:
The polished leaves, and berries red,
Did rustling play;
And, like a passing thought, she fled
In light away.

A WINTER NIGHT.

"Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are,
That bide the pelting of the pitiless storm!
How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides,
Your looped and windowed raggedness, defend you
From seasons such as these?" — SHAKSPEARE.

WHEN biting Boreas, fell and doure,
Sharp shivers through the leafless bower;
When Phœbus gies a short-lived glower
Far south the lift,

Dim-darkening through the flaky shower,
Or whirling drift :

Ae night the storm the steeples rocked,
Poor Labour sweet in sleep was locked,
While burns, wi' snawy wreaths up-choked,
Wild-eddying swirl,
Or, through the mining outlet bocked,
Down headlong hurl.

Listening the doors and winnocks rattle,
I thought me on the ourie cattle,
Or silly sheep, wha bide this brattle
O' winter war,
And through the drift, deep-lairing, sprattle,
Beneath a scaur.

Ilk happing bird, wee, helpless thing,
That, in the merry months o' spring,
Delighted me to hear thee sing,
What comes o' thee ?
Whare wilt thou cower thy chittering wing,
And close thy e'e ?

Even you, on murdering errands toiled,
Lone from your savage homes exiled,
The blood-stained roost, and sheep-cot spoiled,
My heart forgets,
While pitiless the tempest wild
Sore on you beats.

Now Phœbe, in her midnight reign,
Dark muffled, viewed the dreary plain ;

Still crowding thoughts, a pensive train,
Rose in my soul,
When on my ear this plaintive strain
Slow, solemn, stole : —

"Blow, blow, ye winds, with heavier gust!
And freeze, thou bitter-biting frost!
Descend, ye chilly, smothering snows!
Not all your rage, as now united, shews
More hard unkindness, unrelenting,
Vengeful malice unrepenting,
Than heaven-illumined man on brother man bestows!

"See stern Oppression's iron grip,
Or mad Ambition's gory hand,
Sending, like blood-hounds from the slip,
Wo, Want, and Murder o'er a land!
E'en in the peaceful rural vale,
Truth, weeping, tells the mournful tale,
How pampered Luxury, Flattery by her side,
The parasite empoisoning her ear,
With all the servile wretches in the rear,
Looks o'er proud Property, extended wide;
And eyes the simple rustic hind,
Whose toil upholds the glittering show,
A creature of another kind,
Some coarser substance, unrefined,
Placed for her lordly use thus far, thus vile below.

"Where, where is Love's fond, tender throe,
With lordly Honour's lofty brow,
The powers you proudly own?

Is there, beneath Love's noble name,
Can harbour dark the selfish aim,
To bless himself alone!
Mark maiden innocence a prey
To love-pretending snares: —
This boasted Honour turns away,
Shunning soft Pity's rising sway,
Regardless of the tears and unavailing prayers!
Perhaps this hour, in misery's squalid nest,
She strains your infant to her joyless breast,
And with a mother's fears shrinks at the rocking blast!

"Oh ye who, sunk in beds of down,
Feel not a want but what yourselves create,
Think for a moment on his wretched fate
Whom friends and fortune quite disown!
Ill satisfied keen Nature's clamorous call,
Stretched on his straw, he lays himself to sleep,
While through the ragged roof and chinky wall,
Chill o'er his slumbers piles the drifty heap!
Think on the dungeon's grim confine,
Where Guilt and poor Misfortune pine!
Guilt, erring man, relenting view!
But shall thy legal rage pursue
The wretch, already crushèd low
By cruel Fortune's undeservèd blow?
Affliction's sons are brothers in distress;
A brother to relieve, how exquisite the bliss!"

I heard nae mair, for Chanticleer
Shook off the pouthery snaw,

And hailed the morning with a cheer,
A cottage-rousing craw.

But deep this truth impressed my mind —
Through all His works abroad,
The heart benevolent and kind
The most resembles GOD.

YOUNG PEGGY.

TUNE — *Last time I came o'er the Muir.*

YOUNG Peggy blooms our bonniest lass,
Her blush is like the morning,
The rosy dawn, the springing grass,
With early gems adorning:
Her eyes outshine the radiant beams
That gild the passing shower,
And glitter o'er the crystal streams,
And cheer each freshening flower.

Her lips, more than the cherries bright,
A richer dye has graced them;
They charm th' admiring gazer's sight,
And sweetly tempt to taste them:
Her smile is as the evening mild,
When feathered tribes are courting,
And little lambkins wanton wild,
In playful bands disporting.

Were Fortune lovely Peggy's foe,
Such sweetness would relent her,

As blooming Spring unbends the brow
Of surly, savage Winter.
Detraction's eye no aim can gain,
Her winning powers to lessen;
And fretful Envy grins in vain
The poisoned tooth to fasten.

Ye powers of Honour, Love, and Truth,
From every ill defend her;
Inspire the highly-favoured youth
The destinies intend her:
Still fan the sweet connubial flame
Responsive in each bosom,
And bless the dear parental name
With many a filial blossom.

SCOTCH DRINK.

"Gie him strong drink, until he wink,
That 's sinking in despair;
And liquor guid, to fire his bluid,
That 's prest wi' grief and care;
There let him boose, and deep carouse,
Wi' bumpers flowing o'er,
Till he forgets his loves or debts,
And minds his griefs no more."
SOLOMON'S PROVERBS, xxxi. 6, 7.

LET other poets raise a fracas
'Bout vines, and wines, and drucken Bacchus,
And crabbit names and stories wrack us,
And grate our lug:
I sing the juice Scotch beare can mak us,
In glass or jug.

O thou, my Muse! guid auld Scotch drink,
Whether through wimplin' worms thou jink,
Or, richly brown, ream o'er the brink,
In glorious faem,
Inspire me, till I lisp and wink,
To sing thy name!

Let husky wheat the haughs adorn,
And aits set up their awnie horn,
And peas and beans, at e'en or morn,
Perfume the plain,
Leeze me on thee, John Barleycorn,
Thou king o' grain!

On thee aft Scotland chows her cood,
In souple scones, the wale o' food!
Or tumblin' in the boilin' flood
Wi' kail and beef;
But when thou pours thy strong heart's blood,
There thou shines chief.

Food fills the wame, and keeps us livin';
Though life 's a gift no worth receivin',
When heavy dragged wi' pine and grievin';
But, oiled by thee,
The wheels o' life gae down-hill scrievin',
Wi' rattlin' glee.

Thou clears the head o' doited Lear;
Thou cheers the heart o' drooping Care;
Thou strings the nerves o' Labour sair,
At 's weary toil;

Thou even brightens dark Despair
Wi' gloomy smile.

Aft clad in massy siller weed,
Wi' gentles thou erects thy head;
Yet humbly kind in time o' need,
The poor man's wine,
His wee drap parritch, or his bread,
Thou kitchens fine.

Thou art the life o' public haunts;
But thee, what were our fairs and rants?
Even godly meetings o' the saunts,
By thee inspired,
When gaping they besiege the tents,
Are doubly fired.

That merry night we get the corn in,
O sweetly then thou reams the horn in!
Or reekin' on a New-year morning
In cog or bicker,
And just a wee drap sp'ritual burn in,
And gusty sucker!

When Vulcan gies his bellows breath,
And ploughmen gather wi' their graith,
Oh rare! to see thee fizz and freath
I' the lugget caup!
Then Burnewin comes on like death
At every chap.

Nae mercy, then, for airn or steel;
The brawnie, bainie, ploughman chiel,

Brings hard owerhip, wi' sturdy wheel,
The strong forehammer,
Till block and studdie ring and reel
Wi' dinsome clamour.

When skirlin' weanies see the light,
Thou maks the gossips clatter bright,
How fumblin' cuifs their dearies slight;
Wae worth the name!
Nae howdie gets a social night,
Or plack frae them.

When neebors anger at a plea,
And just as wud as wud can be,
How easy can the barley-bree
Cement the quarrel!
It 's aye the cheapest lawyer's fee
To taste the barrel.

Alake! that e'er my Muse has reason
To wyte her countrymen wi' treason!
But monie daily weet their weason
Wi' liquors nice,
And hardly in a winter's season
E'er spier her price.

Wae worth that brandy, burning trash!
Fell source o' monie a pain and brash!
Twins monie a poor, doylt, drucken hash,
O' half his days;
And sends, beside, auld Scotland's cash
To her warst faes.

Ye Scots, wha wish auld Scotland well,
Ye chief, to you my tale I tell:
Poor plackless devils like mysel',
It sets you ill,
Wi' bitter, dearthfu' wines to mell,
Or foreign gill.

May gravels round his blather wrench,
And gouts torment him inch by inch,
Wha twists his gruntle wi' a glunch
O' sour disdain,
Out owre a glass o' whisky-punch
Wi' honest men!

Oh whisky! soul o' plays and pranks!
Accept a bardie's gratefu' thanks!
When wanting thee, what tuneless cranks
Are my poor verses!
Thou comes — they rattle i' their ranks
At ither's ——!

Thee, Ferintosh! oh sadly lost!
Scotland lament frae coast to coast!
Now colic grips, and barkin' hoast,
May kill us a';
For loyal Forbes' chartered boast
Is ta'en awa!

Thae curst horse-leeches o' th' Excise,
Wha mak the whisky-stells their prize!
Haud up thy han', Deil! ance, twice, thrice!
There, seize the blinkers!

And bake them up in brunstane pies
For poor d—d drinkers.

Fortune! if thou 'll but gie me still
Hale breeks, a scone, and whisky-gill,
And rowth o' rhyme to rave at will,
Tak a' the rest,
And deal 't about as thy blind skill
Directs thee best.

THE AUTHOR'S EARNEST CRY AND PRAYER

TO THE SCOTCH REPRESENTATIVES IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

"Dearest of distillation! last and best!
How art thou lost!"— PARODY ON MILTON.

YE Irish lords, ye knights and squires,
Wha represent our brughs and shires,
And doucely manage our affairs
In parliament,
To you a simple Bardie's prayers
Are humbly sent.

Alas! my roopit Muse is hearse!
Your honours' heart wi' grief 't wad pierce,
To see her sittin' on her ——
Low i' the dust,
And screechin' out prosaic verse,
And like to burst!

Tell them wha hae the chief direction,
Scotland and me 's in great affliction,

E'er sin' they laid that curst restriction
On aqua vitæ ;
And rouse them up to strong conviction,
And move their pity.

Stand forth, and tell yon Premier youth,
The honest, open, naked truth :
Tell him o' mine and Scotland's drouth,
His servants humble :
The muckle devil blaw ye south,
If ye dissemble.

Does ony great man glunch and gloom ?
Speak out, and never fash your thoom !
Let posts and pensions sink or soom
Wi' them wha grant 'em :
If honestly they canna come,
Far better want 'em.

In gath'rin' votes you were na slack ;
Now stand as tightly by your tack ;
Ne'er claw your lug, and fidge your back,
And hum and haw ;
But raise your arm, and tell your crack,
Before them a'.

Paint Scotland greeting owre her thrissle,
Her mutchkin stoup as toom 's a whistle ;
And d—d exciseman in a bussle,
Seizin' a stell,
Triumphant crushin 't like a mussel
Or lampit shell.

Then on the tither hand present her,
A blackguard smuggler, right behint her,
And cheek-for-chow, a chuffie vintner
Colleaguing join,
Picking her pouch as bare as winter
Of a' kind coin.

Is there, that bears the name o' Scot,
But feels his heart's bluid rising hot,
To see his poor auld mither's pot
Thus dung in staves,
And plundered o' her hindmost groat
By gallows knaves ?

Alas ! I 'm but a nameless wight,
Trod i' the mire out o' sight !
But could I like Montgomeries fight,
Or gab like Boswell,
There 's some sark-necks I wad draw tight,
And tie some hose well.

God bless your honours, can ye see 't,
The kind, auld, cantie carlin greet,
And no get warmly to your feet,
And gar them hear it,
And tell them with a patriot heat,
Ye winna bear it ?

Some o' you nicely ken the laws,
To round the period and pause,
And wi' rhetóric clause on clause
To mak harangues ; —

Then echo through Saint Stephen's wa's
Auld Scotland's wrangs!

Dempster, a true blue Scot I 'se warran';
Thee, aith-detesting, chaste Kilkerran;
And that glib-gabbet Highland baron,
The Laird o' Graham;
And ane, a chap that 's d—d auldfarran,
Dundas his name.

Erskine, a spunkie Norland billie;
True Campbells, Frederick and Ilay;
And Livingstone, the bauld Sir Willie;
And mony ithers,
Whom auld Demosthenes or Tully
Might own for brithers.

See, sodger Hugh, my watchman stented,
If bardies e'er are represented;
I ken if that your sword were wanted,
Ye 'd lend a hand,
But when there 's ought to say anent it
Ye 're at a stand.[1]

Arouse, my boys! exert your mettle,
To get auld Scotland back her kettle;
Or faith, I 'll wad my new plough-pettle,
Ye 'll see 't or lang,
She 'll teach you wi' a reekin' whittle,
Anither sang.

1 This stanza, alluding to the imperfect elocution of the gallant Montgomery of Coilsfield, was omitted from the poem by the author.

This while she 's been in crankous mood ;
Her lost militia fired her bluid ;
(Deil na they never mair do guid,
Played her that pliskie !)
And now she 's like to rin red-wud
About her whisky.

And L— ! if ance they pit her till 't,
Her tartan petticoat she 'll kilt,
And durk and pistol at her belt,
She 'll tak the streets,
And rin her whittle to the hilt
I' th' first she meets !

For G— sake, sirs ! then speak her fair,
And straik her cannie wi' the hair,
And to the muckle house repair,
Wi' instant speed,
And strive, wi' a' your wit and lear,
To get remead.

Yon ill-tongued tinkler, Charlie Fox,
May taunt you wi' his jeers and mocks ;
But gie him 't het, my hearty cocks !
E'en cow the cadie !
And send him to his dicing-box
And sportin' lady.

Tell yon guid bluid o' auld Boconnocks,
I 'll be his debt twa mashlum bannocks,
And drink his health in auld Nanse Tinnock's
Nine times a week,
If he some scheme, like tea and winnocks,
Wad kindly seek.

Could he some commutation broach,
I 'll pledge my aith in guid braid Scotch,
He need na fear their foul reproach,
Nor erudition,
Yon mixtie-maxtie queer hotch-potch,
The Coalition.

Auld Scotland has a raucle tongue;
She 's just a devil wi' a rung;
And if she promise auld or young
To tak their part,
Though by the neck she should be strung,
She 'll no desert.

And now, ye chosen Five-and-Forty,
May still your mither's heart support ye;
Then, though a minister grow dorty,
And kick your place,
Ye 'll snap your fingers poor and hearty,
Before his face.

God bless your honours a' your days,
Wi' sowps o' kail and brats o' claise,
In spite o' a' the thievish kaes
That haunt St. Jamie's!
Your humble Poet sings and prays,
While Rab his name is.

POSTSCRIPT.

Let half-starved slaves in warmer skies
See future wines, rich clust'ring, rise;

Their lot auld Scotland ne'er envíes,
But blithe and frisky,
She eyes her freeborn, martial boys
Tak aff their whisky.

What though their Phœbus kinder warms,
While fragrance blooms and beauty charms!
When wretches range, in famished swarms,
The scented groves,
Or hounded forth, dishonour arms
In hungry droves.

Their gun 's a burden on their shouther;
They downa bide the stink o' powther;
Their bauldest thought 's a hank'ring swither
To stan' or rin,
Till skelp — a shot — they 're aff, a'thr'owther,
To save their skin.

But bring a Scotchman frae his hill,
Clap in his cheek a Highland gill,
Say such is royal George's will,
And there 's the foe, —
He has nae thought, but how to kill
Twa at a blow.

Nae cauld, faint-hearted doubtings tease him;
Death comes — wi' fearless eye he sees him;
Wi' bluidy han' a welcome gies him;
And when he fa's,
His latest draught o' breathin' lea'es him
In faint huzzas!

Sages their solemn een may steek,
And raise a philosophic reek,
And physically causes seek,
In clime and season;
But tell me whisky's name in Greek,
I'll tell the reason.

Scotland, my auld, respected mither!
Though whiles ye moistify your leather,
Till whare ye sit, on craps o' heather
Ye tine your dam;
Freedom and whisky gang thegither!—
Tak aff your dram!

THE AULD FARMER'S NEW-YEAR MORNING SALUTATION TO HIS AULD MARE MAGGIE,

ON GIVING HER THE ACCUSTOMED RIPP OF CORN, TO HANSEL IN THE NEW YEAR.

A GUID New-year I wish thee, Maggie!
Hae, there's a ripp to thy auld baggie:
Though thou's howe-backit, now, and knaggie,
I've seen the day
Thou could hae gaen like ony staggie
Out-owre the lay.

Though now thou's dowie, stiff, and crazy,
And thy auld hide's as white's a daisy,
I've seen thee dappl't, sleek, and glaizie,
A bonny gray:
He should been tight that daur't to raize thee
Ance in a day.

Thou ance was i' the foremost rank,
A filly buirdly, steeve, and swank,
And set weel down a shapely shank
As e'er tread yird;
And could hae flown out-owre a stank
Like ony bird.

It 's now some nine-and-twenty year,
Sin' thou was my guid-father's meare;
He gied me thee, o' tocher clear,
And fifty mark;
Though it was sma', 't was weel-won gear,
And thou was stark.

When first I gaed to woo my Jenny,
Ye then was trottin' wi' your minnie;
Though ye was trickie, slee, and funnie,
Ye ne'er was donsie:
But hamely, tawie, quiet, and cannie,
And unco sonsie.

That day ye pranced wi' muckle pride,
When ye bure hame my bonny bride:
And sweet and gracefu' she did ride,
Wi' maiden air!
Kyle-Stewart I could braggèd wide,
For sic a pair.

Though now ye dow but hoyte and hobble,
And wintle like a saumont-coble,
That day ye was a jinker noble,
For heels and win'!

And ran them till they a' did wauble
Far, far behin'!

When thou and I were young and skeigh,
And stable-meals at fairs were dreigh,
How thou would prance, and snore, and skreigh,
And tak the road!
Town's bodies ran, and stood abeigh,
And ca't thee mad.

When thou was corn't, and I was mellow,
We took the road aye like a swallow:
At brooses thou had ne'er a fellow
For pith and speed;
But every tail thou pay't them hollow,
Whare'er thou gaed.

The sma' droop-rumpl't, hunter cattle,
Might aiblins waur't thee for a brattle,
But sax Scotch miles thou try't their mettle,
And gar't them whaizle:
Nae whip nor spur, but just a wattle
O' saugh or hazle.

Thou was a noble fittie-lan',
As e'er in tug or tow was drawn!
Aft thee and I, in aught hours' gaun,
In guid March weather,
Hae turned sax rood beside our han'
For days thegither.

Thou never braindg't, and fetch't, and fliskit,
But thy auld tail thou wad hae whisket,

And spread abreed thy weel-filled brisket
Wi' pith and power,
Till spritty knowes wad rair't and risket,
And slypet owre.

When frosts lay lang, and snaws were deep,
And threatened labour back to keep,
I gied thy cog a wee bit heap
Aboon the timmer;
I kenn'd my Maggie wad na sleep
For that, or simmer.

In cart or car thou never reestit;
The stayest brae thou wad hae fac't it;
Thou never lap, and sten't, and breastit,
Then stood to blaw;
But just thy step a wee thing hastit,
Thou snoov't awa'.

My pleugh is now thy bairn-time a',
Four gallant brutes as e'er did draw;
Forbye sax mae I 've sell't awa',
That thou hast nurst:
They drew me thretteen pund and twa,
The very warst.

Monie a sair daurk we twa hae wrought,
And wi' the weary warl' fought;
And monie an anxious day I thought
We wad be beat;
Yet here to crazy age we 're brought,
Wi' something yet.

And think na, my auld trusty servan',
That now perhaps thou 's less deservin',
And thy auld days may end in starvin';
For my last fow,
A heapit stimpart, I 'll reserve ane
Laid by for you.

We 've worn to crazy years thegither;
We 'll toyte about wi' ane anither;
Wi' tentie care I 'll flit thy tether,
To some hain'd rig,
Where ye may nobly rax your leather,
Wi' sma' fatigue.

THE TWA DOGS:

A TALE.

'TWAS in that place o' Scotland's isle
That bears the name o' Auld King Coil,
Upon a bonny day in June,
When wearing through the afternoon,
Twa dogs that were na thrang at hame,
Forgathered ance upon a time.

The first I 'll name, they ca'd him Cæsar,
Was keepit for his honour's pleasure;
His hair, his size, his mouth, his lugs,
Shewed he was nane o' Scotland's dogs,
But whalpit some place far abroad,
Whare sailors gang to fish for cod.

His lockèd, lettered, braw brass-collar,
Shewed him the gentleman and scholar;
But though he was o' high degree,
The fient a pride — nae pride had he;
But wad hae spent an hour caressin',
E'en wi' a tinkler-gipsy's messan.
At kirk or market, mill or smiddie,
Nae tawted tyke, though e'er sae duddie,
But he wad stan't, as glad to see him,
And stroan't on stanes and hillocks wi' him.

The tither was a ploughman's collie,
A rhyming, ranting, roving billie,
Wha for his friend and comrade had him,
And in his freaks had Luath ca'd him,
After some dog in Highland sang,
Was made lang syne — Lord knows how lang!

He was a gash and faithful tyke,
As ever lap a sheugh or dike.
His honest, sonsie, baws'nt face,
Aye gat him friends in ilka place.
His breast was white, his touzie back
Weel clad wi' coat o' glossy black;
His gaucy tail, wi' upward curl,
Hung o'er his hurdies wi' a swirl.

Nae doubt but they were fain o' ither,
And unco pack and thick thegither;
Wi' social nose whyles snuffed and snowkit,
Whyles mice and moudieworts they howkit,
Whyles scoured awa' in lang excursion,
And worried ither in diversion;

Until wi' daffin' weary grown,
Upon a knowe they sat them down,
And there began a lang digression
About the lords o' the creation.

CÆSAR.

I 've often wondered, honest Luath,
What sort o' life poor dogs like you have ;
And when the gentry's life I saw,
What way poor bodies lived ava.

Our laird gets in his racked rents,
His coals, his kain, and a' his stents ;
He rises when he likes himsel' ;
His flunkies answer at the bell ;
He ca's his coach, he ca's his horse ;
He draws a bonny silken purse
As lang 's my tail, whare, through the steeks,
The yellow lettered Geordie keeks.

Frae morn to e'en it 's nought but toiling,
At baking, roasting, frying, boiling ;
And though the gentry first are stechin,
Yet e'en the ha' folk fill their pechan
Wi' sauce, ragouts, and sic-like trashtrie,
That 's little short o' downright wastrie.
Our whipper-in, wee blastit wonner,
Poor worthless elf, it eats a dinner
Better than ony tenant man
His honour has in a' the lan' ;
And what poor cot-folk pit their painch in,
I own it 's past my comprehension.

LUATH.

Trowth, Cæsar, whyles they 're fash't enough;
A cotter howkin' in a sheugh,
Wi' dirty stanes biggin' a dike,
Barring a quarry, and sic-like:
Himself, a wife, he thus sustains,
A smytrie o' wee duddie weans,
And nought but his han' darg, to keep
Them right and tight in thack and rape.

And when they meet wi' sair disasters,
Like loss o' health, or want o' masters,
Ye maist wad think, a wee touch langer,
And they maun starve o' cauld and hunger;
But how it comes, I never kenn'd yet,
They 're maistly wonderfu' contented:
And buirdly chiels, and clever hizzies,
Are bred in sic a way as this is.

CÆSAR.

But then to see how ye 're negleckit,
How huffed, and cuffed, and disrespeckit!
L—, man, our gentry care as little
For delvers, ditchers, and sic cattle;
They gang as saucy by poor folk,
As I wad by a stinkin' brock.
I 've noticed, on our Laird's court-day,
And monie a time my heart 's been wae,
Poor tenant bodies, scant o' cash,
How they maun thole a factor's snash:
He 'll stamp and threaten, curse and swear,

He 'll apprehend them, poind their gear ;
While they maun stan', wi' aspect humble,
And hear it a', and fear and tremble !

I see how folk live that hae riches ;
But surely poor folk maun be wretches !

LUATH.

They 're no sae wretched 's ane wad think ;
Though constantly on poortith's brink :
They 're sae accustomed wi' the sight,
The view o' 't gies them little fright.
Then chance and fortune are sae guided,
They 're aye in less or mair provided ;
And though fatigued wi' close employment,
A blink o' rest 's a sweet enjoyment.

The dearest comfort o' their lives,
Their grushie weans and faithfu' wives ;
The prattling things are just their pride,
That sweetens a' their fireside ;
And whyles twalpennie worth o' nappy
Can mak the bodies unco happy.
They lay aside their private cares,
To mind the Kirk and State affairs :
They 'll talk o' patronage and priests,
Wi' kindling fury in their breasts,
Or tell what new taxation 's comin',
And ferlie at the folk in Lon'on.

As bleak-faced Hallowmas returns,
They get the jovial, ranting kirns,

When rural life o' every station
Unite in common recreation;
Love blinks, Wit slaps, and social Mirth
Forgets there 's Care upo' the earth.

That merry day the year begins,
They bar the door on frosty win's;
The nappy reeks wi' mantling ream,
And sheds a heart-inspiring steam:
The luntin' pipe, and sneeshin-mill,
Are handed round wi' right guidwill;
The cantie auld folks crackin' crouse,
The young anes rantin' through the house,
My heart has been sae fain to see them,
That I for joy hae barkit wi' them.

Still it 's owre true that ye hae said,
Sic game is now owre often played.
There 's monie a creditable stock
O' decent, honest, fawsont fo'k
Are riven out baith root and branch,
Some rascal's pridefu' greed to quench,
Wha thinks to knit himsel' the faster
In favour wi' some gentle master,
Wha aiblins thrang a parliamentin',
For Britain's guid his saul indentin'——

CÆSAR.

Haith, lad, ye little ken about it;
For Britain's guid! guid faith, I doubt it.
Say rather, gaun as Premiers lead him,
And saying Ay or No 's they bid him:

At operas and plays parading,
Mortgaging, gambling, masquerading;
Or maybe, in a frolic daft,
To Hague or Calais takes a waft,
To mak a tour and tak a whirl,
To learn *bon ton*, and see the worl'.

There, at Vienna or Versailles,
He rives his father's auld entails;
Or by Madrid he takes the route,
To thrum guitars, and fecht wi' nowte;
Or down Italian vista startles,
W—— hunting amang groves o' myrtles;
Then bouses drumly German water,
To mak himsel' look fair and fatter,
And clear the consequential sorrows,
Love-gifts of Carnival signoras.

For Britain's guid! — for her destruction!
Wi' dissipation, feud, and faction.

LUATH.

Hech, man! dear sirs! is that the gate
They waste sae mony a braw estate!
Are we sae foughten and harassed
For gear to gang that gate at last!

Oh would they stay aback frae courts,
And please themsel's wi' country sports,
It wad for every ane be better,
The Laird, the Tenant, and the Cotter!
For thae frank, rantin', ramblin' billies,

Fient haet o' them 's ill-hearted fellows;
Except for breakin' o' their timmer,
Or speakin' lightly o' their limmer,
Or shootin' o' a hare or moorcock,
The ne'er a bit they 're ill to poor folk.

But will ye tell me, Master Cæsar,
Sure great folk's life 's a life o' pleasure?
Nae cauld or hunger e'er can steer them,
The very thought o' 't needna fear them.

CÆSAR.

L—, man, were ye but whyles whare I am,
The gentles ye wad ne'er envý 'em.
It 's true they needna starve or sweat,
Through winter's cauld, or simmer's heat;
They 've nae sair wark to craze their banes,
And fill auld age wi' grips and granes;
But human bodies are sic fools,
For a' their colleges and schools,
That when nae real ills perplex them,
They mak enow themsel's to vex them;
And aye the less they hae to sturt them,
In like proportion less will hurt them.

A country fellow at the pleugh,
His acre 's tilled, he 's right eneugh;
A country girl at her wheel,
Her dizzen 's done, she 's unco weel:
But Gentlemen, and Ladies warst,
Wi' even-down want o' wark are curst.
They loiter, lounging, lank, and lazy;

Though deil haet ails them, yet uneasy;
Their days insipid, dull, and tasteless;
Their nights unquiet, lang, and restless.

And e'en their sports, their balls and races,
Their galloping through public places,
There 's sic parade, sic pomp and art,
The joy can scarcely reach the heart.

The men cast out in party matches,
Then sowther a' in deep debauches;
Ae night they 're mad wi' drink and w—ing,
Niest day their life is past enduring.

The Ladies arm-in-arm in clusters,
As great and gracious a' as sisters;
But hear their absent thoughts o' ither,
They 're a' run deils and jads thegither.
Whyles o'er the wee bit cup and platie,
They sip the scandal potion pretty;
Or lee-lang nights, wi' crabbit leuks,
Pore owre the devil's pictured beuks;
Stake on a chance a farmer's stackyard,
And cheat like ony unhanged blackguard.

There 's some exception, man and woman;
But this is Gentry's life in common.

By this, the sun was out o' sight,
And darker gloaming brought the night:
The bum-clock hummed wi' lazy drone;
The kye stood rowtin' i' the loan;
When up they gat, and shook their lugs,

Rejoiced they were na men, but dogs ;
And each took aff his several way,
Resolved to meet some ither day.

TO A LOUSE,

ON SEEING ONE ON A LADY'S BONNET AT CHURCH.

HA ! where ye gaun, ye crawlin' ferlie ?
Your impudence protects you sairly :
I canna say but ye strunt rarely
Owre gauze and lace ;
Though faith, I fear ye dine but sparely
On sic a place.

Ye ugly, creepin', blastit wonner,
Detested, shunned, by saunt and sinner,
How dare you set your fit upon her,
Sae fine a lady ?
Gae somewhere else, and seek your dinner
On some poor body.

Swith, in some beggar's haffet squattle ;
There ye may creep, and sprawl, and sprattle
Wi' ither kindred, jumping cattle,
In shoals and nations ;
Whare horn nor bane ne'er daur unsettle
Your thick plantations.

Now haud you there, ye 're out o' sight,
Below the fatt'rels, snug and tight ;

Na, faith ye yet! ye 'll no be right
Till ye 've got on it,
The very tapmost, towering height
O' Miss's bonnet.

My sooth! right bauld ye set your nose out,
As plump and gray as ony grozet;
Oh for some rank, mercurial rozet,
Or fell, red smeddum!
I 'd gie you sic a hearty doze o' 't,
Wad dress your droddum!

I wad na been surprised to spy
You on an auld wife's flannen toy;
Or aiblins some bit duddie boy,
On 's wyliecoat;
But Miss's fine Lunardi! fie!
How daur ye do 't?

Oh, Jenny, dinna toss your head,
And set your beauties a' abread!
Ye little ken what cursèd speed
The blastie 's makin'!
Thae winks and finger-ends, I dread,
Are notice takin'!

Oh wad some power the giftie gie us
To see oursel's as others see us!
It wad frae monie a blunder free us,
And foolish notion:
What airs in dress and gait wad lea'e us,
And even devotion!

THE ORDINATION.

"For sense they little owe to frugal Heaven —
To please the mob, they hide the little given."

KILMARNOCK wabsters, fidge and claw,
And pour your creeshie nations;
And ye wha leather rax and draw,
O' a' denominations,
Swith to the Laigh Kirk, ane an a',
And there tak up your stations;
Then aff to Begbie's in a raw,
And pour divine libations
For joy this day.

Curst Common Sense, that imp o' h—,
Cam in wi' Maggie Lauder;
But Oliphant aft made her yell,
And Russell sair misca'd her;
This day Mackinlay taks the flail,
And he 's the boy will blaud her!
He 'll clap a shangan on her tail,
And set the bairns to daud her
Wi' dirt this day.

Mak haste and turn King David owre,
And lilt wi' holy clangor;
O' double verse come gie us four,
And skirl up the Bangor:
This day the Kirk kicks up a stoure,
Nae mair the knaves shall wrang her,
For Heresy is in her power,

And gloriously she 'll whang her
Wi' pith this day.

Come, let a proper text be read,
And touch it aff wi' vigour,
How graceless Ham leugh at his dad,
Which made Canaan a nigger;
Or Phinehas drove the murdering blade,
With w— abhorring rigour;
Or Zipporah, the scauldin' jad,
Was like a bluidy tiger
I' the inn that day.

There, try his mettle on the creed,
And bind him down wi' caution,
That stipend is a carnal weed
He taks but for the fashion;
And gie him owre the flock to feed,
And punish each transgression;
Especial, rams that cross the breed,
Gie them sufficient threshin'
Spare them nae day.

Now, auld Kilmarnock, cock thy tail,
And toss thy horns fu' canty;
Nae mair thou 'll rowte out-owre the dale,
Because thy pasture 's scanty;
For lapfu's large o' gospel kail
Shall fill thy crib in plenty,
And runts o' grace the pick and wale,
No gien by way o' dainty,
But ilka day.

Nae mair by Babel's streams we 'll weep,
To think upon our Zion;
And hing our fiddles up to sleep,
Like baby-clouts a-dryin':
Come, screw the pegs, wi' tunefu' cheep,
And o'er the thairms be tryin';
Oh, rare! to see our elbucks wheep,
And a' like lamb-tails flyin'
Fu' fast this day.

Lang, Patronage, wi' rod o' airn,
Has shored the Kirk's undoin',
As lately Fenwick, sair forfairn,
Has proven to its ruin:
Our patron, honest man! Glencairn,
He saw mischiéf was brewin',
And like a godly élect bairn
He 's waled us out a true ane,
And sound this day.

Now, Robertson, harangue nae mair,
But steek your gab for ever;
Or try the wicked town of Ayr,
For there they 'll think you clever;
Or, nae reflection on your lear,
Ye may commence a shaver;
Or to the Netherton repair,
And turn a carpet-weaver
Aff-hand this day.

Mutrie and you were just a match,
We never had sic twa drones:
Auld Hornie did the Laigh Kirk watch,

Just like a winkin' baudrons:
And aye he catched the tither wretch,
To fry them in his caudrons:
But now his honour maun detach,
Wi' a' his brimstone squadrons,
Fast, fast this day.

See, see auld Orthodoxy's faes
She 's swingein through the city:
Hark how the nine-tailed cat she plays!
I vow it 's unco pretty:
There Learning, with his Greekish face,
Grunts out some Latin ditty,
And Common Sense is gaun, she says,
To mak to Jamie Beattie
Her plaint this day.

But there 's Morality himsel'
Embracing all opinions;
Hear how he gies the tither yell,
Between his twa companions;
See how he peels the skin and fell,
As ane were peelin' onions!
Now there — they 're packèd aff to h—,
And banished our dominions
Henceforth this day.

Oh happy day! rejoice, rejoice!
Come bouse about the porter
Morality's demure decoys
Shall here nae mair find quarter:
Mackinlay, Russell, are the boys
That heresy can torture:

They 'll gie her on a rape a hoyse,
And cowe her measure shorter
By th' head some day.

Come, bring the tither mutchkin in,
And here 's for a conclusion : —
To every New Light mother's son,
From this time forth, Confusion !
If mair they deave us wi' their din,
Or Patronage intrusion,
We 'll light a spunk, and every skin
We 'll rin them aff in fusion,
Like oil some day.

AN ADDRESS TO THE UNCO GUID, OR THE RIGIDLY RIGHTEOUS.

"My son, these maxims make a rule,
And lump them aye thegither :
The Rigid Righteous is a fool,
The Rigid Wise anither.
The cleanest corn that e'er was dight
May hae some pyles o' caff in;
So ne'er a fellow-creature slight
For random fits o' daffin."
SOLOMON. — Eccles. vii. 16.

OH ye wha are sae guid yoursel',
Sae pious and sae holy,
Ye 've nought to do but mark and tell
Your neebour's fauts and folly : —
Whase life is like a weel-gaun mill,
Supplied wi' store o' water,
The heapèd happer 's ebbing still,
And still the clap plays clatter : —

Hear me, ye venerable core,
As counsel for poor mortals,
That frequent pass douce Wisdom's door
For glaikit Folly's portals!
I, for their thoughtless, careless sakes,
Would here propone defences,
Their donsie tricks, their black mistakes,
Their failings and mischances.

Ye see your state wi' theirs compared,
And shudder at the niffer:
But cast a moment's fair regard,
What maks the mighty differ?
Discount what scant occasion gave
That purity ye pride in,
And (what 's aft mair than a' the lave)
Your better art o' hiding.

Think, when your castigated pulse
Gies now and then a wallop,
What ragings must his veins convulse,
That still eternal gallop;
Wi' wind and tide fair i' your tail,
Right on ye scud your sea-way;
But in the teeth o' baith to sail,
It makes an unco lee-way.

See Social Life and Glee sit down,
All joyous and unthinking,
Till, quite transmugrified, they 're grown
Debauchery and Drinking.
Oh would they stay to calculate
Th' eternal consequences!

Or your more dreaded hell to state,
  Damnation of expenses!

Ye high, exalted, virtuous dames,
  Tied up in godly laces,
Before ye gie poor Frailty names,
  Suppose a change o' cases;
A dear-loved lad, convenience snug,
  A treacherous inclination —
But, let me whisper i' your lug,
  Ye 're aiblins nae temptation.

Then gently scan your brother man,
  Still gentler sister woman;
Though they may gang a kennin' wrang,
  To step aside is human:
One point must still be greatly dark,
  The moving why they do it:
And just as lamely can ye mark
  How far perhaps they rue it.

Who made the heart, 't is He alone
  Decidedly can try us;
He knows each chord — its various tone,
  Each spring — its various bias.
Then at the balance let 's be mute;
  We never can adjust it;
What 's done we partly may compute,
  But know not what 's resisted.

THE INVENTORY.

IN ANSWER TO A MANDATE BY THE SURVEYOR OF THE TAXES.

SIR, as your mandate did request,
I send you here a faithfu' list
O' gudes and gear, and a' my graith,
To which I 'm clear to gie my aith.

Imprimis, then, for carriage-cattle,
I have four brutes o' gallant mettle,
As ever drew afore a pettle.
My han' afore 's a gude auld has-been,
And wight and wilfu' a' his days been.
My han' ahin 's a weel-gaun filly,
That aft has borne me hame frae Killie,
And your auld burro' monie a time,
In days when riding was nae crime.
But ance, whan in my wooing pride,
I like a blockhead boost to ride,
The wilfu' creature sae I pat to
(L—, pardon all my sins, and that too!)
I played my filly sic a shavie,
She 's a' bedevil'd wi' the spavie.
My fur ahin 's a wordy beast,
As e'er in tug or tow was traced.
The fourth 's a Highland Donald hastie,
A d—d red wud Kilburnie blastie!
Forbye a cowte o' cowtes the wale,
As ever ran afore a tail,
If he be spared to be a beast,
He 'll draw me fifteen pun' at least.

Wheel-carriages I hae but few,
Three carts, and twa are feckly new;
Ae auld wheelbarrow, mair for token
Ae leg and baith the trams are broken;
I made a poker o' the spin'le,
And my auld mither brunt the trin'le.

For men, I 've three mischiévous boys,
Run deils for rantin' and for noise;
A gaudsman ane, a thrasher t' other,
Wee Davock hauds the nowt in fother.
I rule them, as I ought, discreetly,
And aften labour them completely;
And aye on Sundays duly, nightly,
I on the Questions targe them tightly;
Till, faith, wee Davock 's turned sae gleg,
Though scarcely langer than your leg,
He 'll screed you aff Effectual Calling,
As fast as ony in the dwalling.
I 've nane in female servin' station
(L— keep me aye frae a' temptation!)
I hae nae wife — and that my bliss is,
And ye have laid nae tax on misses.
Wi' weans I 'm mair than weel contented,
Heaven sent me ane mae than I wanted.
My sonsie, smirking, dear-bought Bess,
She stares the daddy in her face,
Enough of ought ye like but grace;
But her, my bonny sweet wee lady,
I 've paid enough for her already,
And gin ye tax her or her mither,
B' the L—! ye 'se get them a' thegither.

And now, remember, Mr. Aiken,
Nae kind of licence out I 'm takin' ; . . .
My travel a' on foot I 'll shank it,
I 've sturdy bearers, Gude be thankit. . . .
Sae dinna put me in your buke,
Nor for my ten white shillings luke.

This list wi' my ain hand I 've wrote it,
The day and date as under noted ;
Then know all ye whom it concerns,
Subscripsi huic, ROBERT BURNS.

MOSSGIEL, *February* 22, 1786.

TO MR. JOHN KENNEDY.

NOW, Kennedy, if foot or horse
E'er bring you in by Mauchline Corse,
L—, man, there 's lasses there wad force
A hermit's fancy ;
And down the gate, in faith, they 're worse,
And mair unchancy.

But, as I 'm sayin', please step to Dow's,
And taste sic gear as Johnnie brews,
Till some bit callan bring me news
That you are there ;
And if we dinna haud a bouze,
I 'se ne'er drink mair.

It 's no I like to sit and swallow,
Then like a swine to puke and wallow ;

But gie me just a true guid fallow,
Wi' right engine,
And spunkie, ance to make us mellow,
And then we 'll shine.

Now, if ye 're ane o' warld's folk.
Wha rate the wearer by the cloak,
And sklent on poverty their joke,
Wi' bitter sneer,
Wi' you no friendship will I troke,
Nor cheap nor dear.

But if, as I 'm informèd weel,
Ye hate, as ill 's the very deil,
The flinty heart that canna feel,
Come, sir, here 's tae you!
Hae, there 's my han', I wiss you weel,
And guid be wi' you!

R. B.

INSCRIBED ON THE BLANK-LEAF OF A COPY OF MISS HANNAH MORE'S WORKS, PRESENTED BY THE AUTHOR.

THOU flattering mark of friendship kind,
Still may thy pages call to mind
The dear, the beauteous Donor:
Though sweetly female every part,
Yet such a head, and more the heart,
Does both the sexes honour.
She shewed her taste refined and just
When she selected thee,
Yet deviating own I must,

In sae approving me;
But kind still, I'll mind still
The Giver in the gift —
I'll bless her, and wiss her
A friend aboon the lift.

TO A MOUNTAIN DAISY,

ON TURNING ONE DOWN WITH THE PLOUGH IN APRIL, 1786.

WEE, modest, crimson-tippèd flower,
Thou's met me in an evil hour;
For I maun crush amang the stoure
Thy slender stem:
To spare thee now is past my power,
Thou bonny gem.

Alas! it's no thy neibor sweet,
The bonny lark, companion meet,
Bending thee 'mang the dewy weet,
Wi' speckled breast,
When upward-springing, blithe, to greet
The purpling east!

Cauld blew the bitter biting north
Upon thy early, humble birth;
Yet cheerfully thou glinted forth
Amid the storm,
Scarce reared above the parent earth
Thy tender form.

The flaunting flowers our gardens yield,
High sheltering woods and wa's maun shield:
But thou, beneath the random bield
O' clod or stane,
Adorns the histie stibble-field,
Unseen, alane.

There, in thy scanty mantle clad,
Thy snawie bosom sunward spread,
Thou lifts thy unassuming head
In humble guise;
But now the share uptears thy bed,
And low thou lies!

Such is the fate of artless maid,
Sweet floweret of the rural shade!
By love's simplicity betrayed,
And guileless trust,
Till she, like thee, all soiled, is laid
Low i' the dust.

Such is the fate of simple bard,
On life's rough ocean luckless starr'd!
Unskilful he to note the card
Of prudent lore,
Till billows rage, and gales blow hard,
And whelm him o'er!

Such fate to suffering worth is given,
Who long with wants and woes has striven,
By human pride or cunning driven
To misery's brink,

Till wrenched of every stay but Heaven,
He, ruined, sink!

Even thou who mourn'st the Daisy's fate,
That fate is thine — no distant date;
Stern Ruin's ploughshare drives, elate,
Full on thy bloom,
Till crushed beneath the furrow's weight,
Shall be thy doom.

LAMENT,

OCCASIONED BY THE UNFORTUNATE ISSUE OF A FRIEND'S AMOUR.

"Alas! how oft does goodness wound itself,
And sweet affection prove the spring of woe!" — HOME.

OH thou pale orb, that silent shines,
While care-untroubled mortals sleep!
Thou seest a wretch who inly pines,
And wanders here to wail and weep!
With woe I nightly vigils keep
Beneath thy wan, unwarming beam;
And mourn, in lamentation deep,
How life and love are all a dream.

I joyless view thy rays adorn
The faintly-markèd distant hill:
I joyless view thy trembling horn
Reflected in the gurgling rill:
My fondly-fluttering heart be still!
Thou busy power, remembrance, cease!

Ah! must the agonising thrill
For ever bar returning peace!

No idly-feigned poetic pains
My sad, love-lorn lamentings claim;
No shepherd's pipe — Arcadian strains;
No fabled tortures, quaint and tame:
The plighted faith, the mutual flame,
The oft-attested Powers above,
The promised father's tender name —
These were the pledges of my love!

Encircled in her clasping arms,
How have the raptured moments flown!
How have I wished for fortune's charms
For her dear sake, and hers alone!
And must I think it! — is she gone,
My secret heart's exulting boast?
And does she heedless hear my groan?
And is she ever, ever lost?

Oh can she bear so base a heart,
So lost to honour, lost to truth,
As from the fondest lover part,
The plighted husband of her youth!
Alas! life's path may be unsmooth!
Her way may lie through rough distress!
Then who her pangs and pains will soothe,
Her sorrows share, and make them less?

Ye wingèd hours that o'er us passed,
Enraptured more, the more enjoyed,
Your dear remembrance in my breast,

My fondly-treasured thoughts employed.
That breast, how dreary now, and void,
For her too scanty once of room!
Even every ray of hope destroyed,
And not a wish to gild the gloom!

The morn that warns th' approaching day,
Awakes me up to toil and woe:
I see the hours in long array,
That I must suffer, lingering, slow.
Full many a pang, and many a throe,
Keen recollection's direful train,
Must wring my soul ere Phœbus, low,
Shall kiss the distant western main.

And when my nightly couch I try,
Sore harassed out with care and grief,
My toil-beat nerves, and tear-worn eye
Keep watchings with the nightly thief.
Or if I slumber, fancy, chief,
Reigns haggard-wild in sore affright:
Even day, all bitter, brings relief
From such a horror-breathing night.

Oh thou bright queen, who o'er th' expanse,
Now highest reign'st, with boundless sway!
Oft has thy silent-marking glance
Observed us, fondly-wandering, stray!
The time unheeded sped away,
While love's luxurious pulse beat high,
Beneath thy silver-gleaming ray,
To mark the mutual kindling eye.

Oh scenes in strong remembrance set!
  Scenes never, never to return!
Scenes, if in stupor I forget,
  Again I feel, again I burn!
From every joy and pleasure torn,
  Life's weary vale I'll wander through;
And hopeless, comfortless, I'll mourn
  A faithless woman's broken vow.

DESPONDENCY.

AN ODE.

OPPRESSED with grief, oppressed with care,
  A burden more than I can bear,
  I set me down and sigh:
Oh life! thou art a galling load,
Along a rough, a weary road,
  To wretches such as I!
Dim-backward as I cast my view,
  What sickening scenes appear!
What sorrows yet may pierce me through,
  Too justly I may fear!
    Still caring, despairing,
      Must be my bitter doom;
    My woes here shall close ne'er
      But with the closing tomb!

Happy, ye sons of busy life,
Who, equal to the bustling strife,
  No other view regard!
Even when the wished end 's denied,

Yet while the busy means are plied,
They bring their own reward:
Whilst I, a hope-abandoned wight,
Unfitted with an aim,
Meet every sad returning night
And joyless morn the same.
You, bustling, and justling,
Forget each grief and pain;
I, listless, yet restless,
Find every prospect vain.

How blest the solitary's lot,
Who, all-forgetting, all-forgot,
Within his humble cell,
The cavern wild with tangling roots,
Sits o'er his newly-gathered fruits,
Beside his crystal well!
Or haply to his evening thought,
By unfrequented stream,
The ways of men are distant brought,
A faint collected dream;
While praising, and raising
His thoughts to Heaven on high,
As wand'ring, meand'ring,
He views the solemn sky.

Than I, no lonely hermit placed,
Where never human footstep traced,
Less fit to play the part;
The lucky moment to improve,
And just to stop, and just to move,
With self-respecting art.
But ah! those pleasures, loves, and joys,

Which I too keenly taste,
The solitary can despise,
Can want, and yet be blest!
He needs not, he heeds not,
Or human love or hate,
Whilst I here, must cry here
At perfidy ingrate!

Oh enviable, early days,
When dancing thoughtless pleasure's maze,
To care, to guilt unknown!
How ill exchanged for riper times,
To feel the follies, or the crimes,
Of others, or my own!
Ye tiny elves that guiltless sport,
Like linnets in the bush,
Ye little know the ills ye court,
When manhood is your wish!
The losses, the crosses,
That active man engage!
The fears all, the tears all,
Of dim declining age.

TO RUIN.

ALL hail! inexorable lord,
At whose destruction-breathing word
The mightiest empires fall!
Thy cruel, woe-delighted train,
The ministers of grief and pain,
A sullen welcome, all!

With stern-resolved, despairing eye,
I see each aimèd dart;
For one has cut my dearest tie,
And quivers in my heart.
Then lowering and pouring,
The storm no more I dread;
Though thick'ning and black'ning
Round my devoted head.

And thou grim Power, by life abhorred,
While life a pleasure can afford,
Oh hear a wretch's prayer!
No more I shrink appalled, afraid;
I court, I beg thy friendly aid,
To close this scene of care!
When shall my soul, in silent peace,
Resign life's joyless day;
My weary heart its throbbings cease,
Cold mouldering in the clay?
No fear more, no tear more,
To stain my lifeless face;
Enclaspèd and graspèd
Within thy cold embrace!

SONG.

AGAIN rejoicing Nature sees
Her robe assume its vernal hues;
Her leafy locks wave in the breeze,
All freshly steeped in morning dews.

In vain to me the cowslips blaw,
In vain to me the violets spring;
In vain to me, in glen or shaw,
The mavis and the lintwhite sing.

The merry ploughboy cheers his team,
Wi' joy the tentie seedsman stalks;
But life to me 's a weary dream,
A dream of ane that never wauks.

The wanton coot the water skims,
Amang the reeds the ducklings cry,
The stately swan majestic swims,
And everything is blest but I.

The shepherd steeks his faulding slap,
And owre the moorland whistles shrill;
Wi' wild, unequal, wandering step,
I meet him on the dewy hill.

And when the lark, 'tween light and dark,
Blithe waukens by the daisy's side,
And mounts and sings on flittering wings,
A woe-worn ghaist I hameward glide.

Come, Winter, with thine angry howl,
And raging bend the naked tree:
Thy gloom will soothe my cheerless soul,
When Nature all is sad like me!

NOTE TO GAVIN HAMILTON.

I HOLD it, sir, my bounden duty,
To warn you how that Master Tootie,
Alias, Laird M'Gaun,
Was here to hire yon lad away
'Bout whom ye spak the tither day,
And wad hae done 't aff han':
But lest he learn the callan tricks,
As, faith, I muckle doubt him,
Like scrapin' out auld Crummie's nicks,
And tellin' lies about them;
As lieve then, I 'd have then,
Your clerkship he should sair,
If sae be ye may be
Not fitted other where.

Although I say 't, he 's gleg enough,
And 'bout a house that 's rude and rough,
The boy might learn to swear;
But then wi' you he 'll be sae taught,
And get sic fair example straught,
I havena ony fear.
Ye 'll catechise him every quirk,
And shore him weel wi' h—,
And gar him follow to the kirk —
Aye when ye gang yoursel'.
If ye, then, maun be, then,
Frae hame this comin' Friday;
Then please, sir, to lea'e, sir,
The orders wi' your leddy.

My word of honour I hae gien,
In Paisley John's, that night at e'en,
To meet the warld's worm;
To try to get the twa to gree,
And name the airles and the fee,
In legal mode and form.
I ken he weel a sneck can draw,
When simple bodies let him;
And if a devil be at a',
In faith he 's sure to get him.
To phrase you, and praise you,
Ye ken your Laureate scorns:
The prayer still, you share still,
Of grateful MINSTREL BURNS.

EPISTLE TO A YOUNG FRIEND.

I LANG hae thought, my youthfu' friend,
A something to have sent you,
Though it should serve nae other end
Than just a kind memento;
But how the subject-theme may gang,
Let time and chance determine;
Perhaps it may turn out a sang,
Perhaps turn out a sermon.

Ye 'll try the world fu' soon, my lad,
And, Andrew dear, believe me,
Ye 'll find mankind an unco squad,

And muckle they may grieve ye.
For care and trouble set your thought,
Even when your end 's attained;
And a' your views may come to nought,
Where every nerve is strained.

I 'll no say men are villains a';
The real, hardened wicked,
Wha hae nae check but human law,
Are to a few restricked:
But, och! mankind are unco weak,
And little to be trusted;
If self the wavering balance shake,
It 's rarely right adjusted!

Yet they wha fa' in fortune's strife,
Their fate we should na censure,
For still th' important end of life
They equally may answer:
A man may hae an honest heart,
Though poortith hourly stare him;
A man may tak a neibor's part,
Yet hae nae cash to spare him.

Aye free, aff han' your story tell,
When wi' a bosom crony;
But still keep something to yoursel'
Ye scarcely tell to ony.
Conceal yoursel' as weel 's ye can
Frae critical dissection,
But keek through every other man
Wi' sharpened, sly inspection.

The sacred lowe o' weel-placed love,
Luxuriantly indulge it;
But never tempt th' illicit rove,
Though naething should divulge it.
I waive the quantum o' the sin,
The hazard of concealing;
But, och! it hardens a' within,
And petrifies the feeling!

To catch Dame Fortune's golden smile,
Assiduous wait upon her;
And gather gear by every wile
That 's justified by honour;
Not for to hide it in a hedge,
Nor for a train-attendant,
But for the glorious privilege
Of being independent.

The fear o' hell 's a hangman's whip,
To haud the wretch in order;
But where ye feel your honour grip,
Let that aye be your border:
Its slightest touches, instant pause —
Debar a' side-pretences;
And resolutely keep its laws,
Uncaring consequences.

The great Creator to revere
Must sure become the creature,
But still the preaching cant forbear,
And even the rigid feature.
Yet ne'er with wits profane to range,
Be cómplaisance extended;

An Atheist laugh 's a poor exchange
For Deity offended !

When ranting round in Pleasure's ring,
Religion may be blinded ;
Or if she gie a random sting,
It may be little minded ;
But when on life we 're tempest-driven,
A conscience but a canker,
A correspondence fixed wi' Heaven
Is sure a noble anchor !

Adieu, dear amiable youth !
Your heart can ne'er be wanting !
May prudence, fortitude, and truth,
Erect your brow undaunting !
In ploughman phrase, " God send you speed,"
Still daily to grow wiser ;
And may you better reck the rede
Than ever did th' adviser ! [1]

[1] In a copy of this poem in Burns's own hand, and bearing date " Mossgiel, May 15th, 1786," there occurs an additional stanza which the admirable taste of the poet had doubtless observed to be below the rest in terseness and point, and which he had therefore seen fit to omit. It throws so valuable a light on the state of his own mind at this crisis, that it certainly ought not to be suppressed, though we should not desire to see it replaced in the poem. It occurs immediately after the line, "And petrifies the feeling."

If ye hae made a step aside,
Some hap mistake o'erta'en you,
Yet still keep up a decent pride,
And ne'er o'er far demean you.
Time comes wi' kind oblivious shade,
And daily darker sets it,
And if nae mair mistakes are made,
The world soon forgets it.

FLOW GENTLY, SWEET AFTON.

TUNE— *The Yellow-haired Laddie.*

FLOW gently, sweet Afton, among thy green braes,
Flow gently, I'll sing thee a song in thy praise;
My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring stream,
Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her dream.

Thou stock-dove whose echo resounds through the glen,
Ye wild whistling blackbirds in yon thorny den,
Thou green-crested lapwing thy screaming forbear,
I charge you disturb not my slumbering fair.

How lofty, sweet Afton, thy neighbouring hills,
Far marked with the courses of clear winding rills;
There daily I wander as noon rises high,
My flocks and my Mary's sweet cot in my eye.

How pleasant thy banks and green valleys below,
Where wild in the woodlands the primroses blow;
There oft as mild evening weeps over the lea,
The sweet-scented birk shades my Mary and me.

Thy crystal stream, Afton, how lovely it glides,
And winds by the cot where my Mary resides;
How wanton thy waters her snowy feet lave,
As gathering sweet flowerets she stems thy clear wave.

Flow gently, sweet Afton, among thy green braes,
Flow gently, sweet river, the theme of my lays;
My Mary 's asleep by thy murmuring stream,
Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her dream.

THE HIGHLAND LASSIE.

NAE gentle dames, though e'er sae fair,
Shall ever be my Muse's care:
Their titles a' are empty show;
Gie me my Highland lassie, O.

Within the glen sae bushy, O,
Aboon the plains sae rushy, O,
I set me down wi' right good-will,
To sing my Highland lassie, O.

Oh were yon hills and valleys mine,
Yon palace and yon gardens fine,
The world then the love should know
I bear my Highland lassie, O.

But fickle Fortune frowns on me,
And I maun cross the raging sea;
But while my crimson currents flow,
I 'll love my Highland lassie, O.

Although through foreign climes I range,
I know her heart will never change,
For her bosom burns with honour's glow,
My faithful Highland lassie, O.

For her I'll dare the billows' roar,
For her I'll trace a distant shore,
That Indian wealth may lustre throw
Around my Highland lassie, O.

She has my heart, she has my hand,
By sacred truth and honour's band!
'Till the mortal stroke shall lay me low,
I'm thine, my Highland lassie, O.

Farewell the glen sae bushy, O!
Farewell the plain sae rushy, O!
To other lands I now must go,
To sing my Highland lassie, O.

A PRAYER FOR MARY.

POWERS celestial! whose protection
Ever guards the virtuous fair,
While in distant climes I wander,
Let my Mary be your care:
Let her form sae fair and faultless,
Fair and faultless as your own,
Let my Mary's kindred spirit
Draw your choicest influence down

Make the gales you waft around her
Soft and peaceful as her breast;
Breathing in the breeze that fans her,
Soothe her bosom into rest:

Guardian angels! oh, protect her
When in distant lands I roam;
To realms unknown while fate exiles me,
Make her bosom still my home.

WILL YE GO TO THE INDIES, MY MARY?

WILL ye go to the Indies, my Mary,
And leave auld Scotia's shore?
Will ye go to the Indies, my Mary,
Across the Atlantic's roar?

Oh sweet grow the lime and the orange,
And the apple on the pine;
But a' the charms o' the Indies
Can never equal thine.

I hae sworn by the Heavens to my Mary,
I hae sworn by the Heavens to be true;
And sae may the Heavens forget me
When I forget my vow!

Oh plight me your faith, my Mary,
And plight me your lily-white hand;
Oh plight me your faith, my Mary,
Before I leave Scotia's strand.

We hae plighted our troth, my Mary,
In mutual affection to join;
And curst be the cause that shall part us,
The hour and the moment o' time!

ELIZA.

TUNE — *Gilderoy.*

FROM thee, Eliza, I must go,
And from my native shore:
The cruel fates between us throw
A boundless ocean's roar;
But boundless oceans, roaring wide
Between my love and me,
They never, never can divide
My heart and soul from thee.

Farewell, farewell, Eliza dear,
The maid that I adore!
A boding voice is in my ear,
We part to meet no more!
But the last throb that leaves my heart,
While death stands victor by,
That throb, Eliza, is thy part,
And thine that latest sigh!

THOUGH CRUEL FATE.[1]

TUNE — *The Northern Lass.*

THOUGH cruel fate should bid us part,
Far as the pole and line;
Her dear idea round my heart
Should tenderly entwine.

Though mountains rise and deserts howl,
And oceans roar between,
Yet dearer than my deathless soul,
I still would love my Jean.

[1] See *ante*, p. 78.

ADDRESS OF BEELZEBUB.

LONG life, my lord, and health be yours,
Unscaithed by hungered Highland boors;
Lord, grant nae duddie desperate beggar,
Wi' dirk, claymore, or rusty trigger,
May twin auld Scotland o' a life
She likes — as lambkins like a knife.
Faith, you and Applecross were right
To keep the Highland hounds in sight;
I doubt na! they wad bid nae better
Than, let them ance out owre the water,
Then up amang thae lakes and seas,
They 'll mak what rules and laws they please.
Some daring Hancock, or a Franklin,
May set their Highland bluid a-ranklin';
Some Washington again may head them,
Or some Montgomery, fearless, lead them,
Till God knows what may be effected,
When by such heads and hearts directed.
Poor dunghill sons of dirt and mire
May to patrician rights aspire!
Nae sage North now, nor sager Sackville,
To watch and premier o'er the pack vile,
And whare will ye get Howes and Clintons
To bring them to a right repentance,
To cowe the rebel generation,
And save the honour o' the nation?
They, and be d——! what right hae they
To meat or sleep, or light o' day?
Far less to riches, power, or freedom,
But what your lordship likes to gie them?

But hear, my lord! Glengarry, hear!
Your hand 's owre light on them, I fear;
Your factors, grieves, trustees, and bailies,
I canna say but they do gaylies;
They lay aside a' tender mercies,
And tirl the hallions to the birses;
Yet while they 're only poind't and herriet,
They 'll keep their stubborn Highland spirit;
But smash them, crash them a' to spails!
And rot the dyvors i' the jails!
The young dogs, swinge them to the labour;
Let wark and hunger mak them sober!
The hizzies, if they 're oughtlins fawsont,
Let them in Drury Lane be lessoned!
And if the wives and dirty brats
E'en thigger at your doors and yetts,
Flaffan wi' duds and gray wi' beas',
Frightin' awa' your deucks and geese,
Get out a horsewhip or a jowler,
The langest thong, the fiercest growler,
And gar the tattered gipsies pack,
Wi' a' their bastards on their back!
Go on, my lord! I lang to meet you,
And in my *house at hame* to greet you.
Wi' common lords ye shanna mingle;
The bennost neuk beside the ingle,
At my right han' assigned your seat
'Tween Herod's hip and Polycrate —
Or, if you on your station tarrow,
Between Almagro and Pizarro,
A seat, I 'm sure, ye 're weel deservin 't;
And till ye come — Your humble servant,

BEELZEBUB.

June 1*st*, *Anno Mundi* 5790 [*A.D.* 1786].

A DREAM.

"Thoughts, words, and deeds the statute blames with reason;
But surely dreams were ne'er indicted treason."

GUID-MORNIN' to your Majesty!
May Heaven augment your blisses,
On every new birthday, ye see,
A humble poet wishes!
My bardship here, at your levee,
On sic a day as this is,
Is sure an uncouth sight to see,
Amang thae birthday dresses
Sae fine this day.

I see ye 're complimented thrang,
By many a lord and lady;
"God save the king!" 's a cuckoo sang
That 's unco easy said aye;
The poets, too, a venal gang,
Wi' rhymes weel-turned and ready,
Wad gar ye trow ye ne'er do wrang,
But aye unerring steady,
On sic a day.

For me, before a monarch's face
Even there I winna flatter;
For neither pension, post, nor place,
Am I your humble debtor:
So, nae reflection on your grace,
Your kingship to bespatter;
There 's mony waur been o' the race,
And aiblins ane been better
Than you this day.

'T is very true, my sovereign king,
My skill may weel be doubted:
But facts are chiels that winna ding,
And downa be disputed:
Your royal nest, beneath your wing,
Is e'en right reft and clouted,
And now the third part of the string,
And less, will gang about it
Than did ae day.

Far be 't frae me that I aspire
To blame your legislation,
Or say ye wisdom want, or fire,
To rule this mighty nation!
But faith! I muckle doubt, my sire,
Ye 've trusted ministration
To chaps, wha, in a barn or byre,
Wad better filled their station
Than courts yon day.

And now ye 've gien auld Britain peace,
Her broken shins to plaister,
Your sair taxation does her fleece,
Till she has scarce a tester.
For me, thank God, my life 's a lease,
Nae bargain wearing faster,
Or, faith! I fear, that, wi' the geese,
I shortly boost to pasture
I' the craft some day.

I 'm no mistrusting Willie Pitt,
When taxes he enlarges,
(And Will 's a true guid fallow's get,

A name not envy spairges),
That he intends to pay your debt,
And lessen a' your charges;
But G— sake! let nae saving fit
Abridge your bonny barges
And boats this day.

Adieu, my liege! may Freedom geck
Beneath your high protection;
And may you rax Corruption's neck,
And gie her for dissection.
But since I 'm here, I 'll no neglect,
In loyal, true affection,
To pay your Queen, with due respect,
My fealty and subjection
This great birthday.

Hail Majesty Most Excellent!
While nobles strive to please ye,
Will ye accept a compliment
A simple poet gies ye?
Thae bonny bairn-time Heaven has lent,
Still higher may they heeze ye
In bliss, till fate some day is sent,
Forever to release ye
Frae care that day.

For you, young potentate o' Wales,
I tell Your Highness fairly,
Down Pleasure's stream, wi' swelling sails,
I 'm tauld ye 're driving rarely;
But some day ye may gnaw your nails,
And curse your folly sairly,

That e'er ye brak Diana's pales,
Or rattled dice wi' Charlie,
By night or day.

Yet aft a ragged cowte 's been known
To mak a noble aiver;
So, ye may doucely fill a throne,
For a' their clish-ma-claver:
There, him at Agincourt wha shone,
Few better were or braver;
And yet, wi' funny, queer Sir John,
He was an unco shaver,
For monie a day.

For you, Right Reverend Osnaburg,
Nane sets the lawn-sleeve sweeter,
Although a ribbon at your lug
Wad been a dress completer:
As ye disown yon paughty dog
That bears the keys of Peter,
Then, swith! and get a wife to hug,
Or, trouth! ye 'll stain the mitre
Some luckless day.

Young, royal Tarry Breeks, I learn,
Ye 've lately come athwart her,
A glorious galley, stem and stern,
Weel rigged for Venus' barter;
But first hang out, that she 'll discern,
Your hymeneal charter,
Then heave aboard your grapple-airn,
And, large upon her quarter,
Come full that day.

Ye, lastly, bonny blossoms a',
Ye royal lassies dainty,
Heaven mak ye guid as weel as braw,
And gie you lads a-plenty.
But sneer na British boys awa',
For kings are unco scant aye;
And German gentles are but sma',
They 're better just than want aye
On ony day.

God bless you a'! consider now,
Ye 're unco muckle dautet;
But ere the course o' life be through,
It may be bitter sautet:
And I hae seen their coggie fou,
That yet hae tarrow't at it;
But or the day was done, I trow,
The laggen they hae clautet
Fu' clean that day.

THE HOLY FAIR.

"A robe of seeming truth and trust
Hid crafty observation;
And secret hung, with poisoned crust,
The dirk of Defamation:
A mask that like the gorget showed,
Dye-varying on the pigeon;
And for a mantle large and broad,
He wrapt him in Religion."
Hypocrisy à-la-Mode.

UPON a simmer Sunday-morn,
When Nature's face is fair,
I walkèd forth to view the corn,

And snuff the cauler air.
The rising sun o'er Galston muirs,
Wi' glorious light was glintin';
The hares were hirplin' down the furs,
The lav'rocks they were chantin'
Fu' sweet that day.

As lightsomely I glowr'd abroad,
To see a scene sae gay,
Three hizzies, early at the road,
Cam skelpin' up the way.
Twa had manteeles o' dolefu' black,
But ane wi' lyart lining;
The third, that gaed a-wee a-back,
Was in the fashion shining,
Fu' gay that day.

The twa appeared like sisters twin,
In feature, form, and claes;
Their visage withered, lang, and thin,
And sour as ony slaes.
The third cam up, hap-step-an'-lowp,
As light as ony lambie,
And wi' a curchie low did stoop,
As soon as e'er she saw me,
Fu' kind that day.

Wi' bonnet aff, quoth I: "Sweet lass,
I think ye seem to ken me;
I'm sure I've seen that bonny face,
But yet I canna name ye."
Quo' she, and laughin' as she spak,
And taks me by the hands:

"Ye, for my sake, hae gien the feck
Of a' the ten commands
A screed some day.

"My name is Fun — your cronie dear,
The nearest friend ye hae;
And this is Superstition here,
And that 's Hypocrisy.
I 'm gaun to Mauchline Holy Fair,
To spend an hour in daffin':
Gin ye 'll go there, yon runkled pair,
We will get famous laughin'
At them this day."

Quoth I: "With a' my heart, I 'll do 't;
I 'll get my Sunday's sark on,
And meet you on the holy spot —
Faith, we 'se hae fine remarkin'!"
Then I gaed hame at crowdie-time,
And soon I made me ready;
For roads were clad, from side to side,
Wi' mony a weary body,
In droves that day.

Here farmers gash, in ridin' graith,
Gaed hoddin by their cotters;
There, swankies young, in braw braid claith
Are springin' o'er the gutters.
The lasses, skelpin' barefit, thrang,
In silks and scarlets glitter;
Wi' sweet-milk cheese, in monie a whang,
And farls baked wi' butter,
Fu' crump that day.

When by the plate we set our nose,
Weel heapèd up wi' ha'pence,
A greedy glowr Black-bonnet throws,
And we maun draw our tippence.
Then in we go to see the show;
On every side they 're gath'rin',
Some carrying dails, some chairs, and stools,
And some are busy blethrin'
Right loud that day.

Here stands a shed to fend the showers,
And screen our country gentry,
There, Racer Jess, and twa-three w——s,
Are blinkin' at the entry.
Here sits a raw of tittlin' jauds,
Wi' heaving breast and bare neck,
And there a batch o' wabster lads,
Blackguarding frae Kilmarnock
For fun this day.

Here, some are thinkin' on their sins,
And some upo' their claes;
Ane curses feet that fyl'd his shins,
Anither sighs and prays:
On this hand sits a chosen swatch,
Wi' screwed-up, grace-proud faces;
On that a set o' chaps at watch,
Thrang winkin' on the lasses
To chairs that day.

Oh happy is that man and blest!
Nae wonder that it pride him,
Wha's ain dear lass, that he likes best,

Comes clinkin' down beside him!
Wi' arm reposed on the chair-back,
He sweetly does compose him;
Which, by degrees, slips round her neck,
An 's loof upon her bosom,
Unkenn'd that day.

Now a' the congregation o'er
Is silent expectation:
For Moodie speels the holy door,
Wi' tidings o' d——tion.[1]
Should Hornie, as in ancient days,
'Mang sons o' God present him,
The very sight o' Moodie's face
To 's ain het hame had sent him
Wi' fright that day.

Hear how he clears the points o' Faith
Wi' rattlin' and wi' thumpin'!
Now meekly calm, now wild in wrath,
He 's stampin' and he 's jumpin'!
His lengthened chin, his turned-up snout,
His eldritch squeel and gestures,
Oh how they fire the heart devout,
Like cantharidian plasters,
On sic a day!

But hark! the tent has changed its voice;
There 's peace and rest nae langer;
For a' the real judges rise,

[1] In the Kilmarnock edition, the word was salvation: it was changed at the suggestion of Dr. Blair of Edinburgh. Moodie was the minister of Riccarton, and one of the heroes of *The Twa Herds*.

They canna sit for anger.
Smith opens out his cauld harangues,
On practice and on morals;
And aff the godly pour in thrangs,
To gie the jars and barrels
A lift that day.

What signifies his barren shine
Of moral powers and reason?
His English style and gesture fine
Are a' clean out o' season.
Like Socrates or Antonine,
Or some auld pagan heathen,
The moral man he does define,
But ne'er a word o' faith in
That 's right that day.

In guid time comes an antidote
Against sic poisoned nostrum;
For Peebles, frae the Water-fit,
Ascends the holy rostrum:
See, up he 's got the Word o' God,
And meek and mim has viewed it,
While Common Sense has ta'en the road,
And aff and up the Cowgate,
Fast, fast that day.

Wee Miller niest the guard relieves,
And orthodoxy raibles,
Though in his heart he weel believes,
And thinks it auld wives' fables:
But, faith! the birkie wants a manse,
So, cannily he hums them;

Although his carnal wit and sense
Like hafflins-ways o'ercomes him
At times that day.

Now but and ben the change-house fills,
Wi' yill-caup commentators;
Here 's crying out for bakes and gills,
And there the pint-stoup clatters;
While thick and thrang, and loud and lang,
Wi' logic and wi' scripture,
They raise a din, that, in the end,
Is like to breed a rupture
O' wrath that day.

Leeze me on drink! it gies us mair
Than either school or college:
It kindles wit, it waukens lair,
It pangs us fou o' knowledge.
Be 't whisky gill, or penny wheep,
Or ony stronger potion,
It never fails, on drinking deep,
To kittle up our notion
By night or day.

The lads and lasses, blithely bent
To mind baith saul and body,
Sit round the table weel content,
And steer about the toddy.
On this ane's dress, and that ane's leuk,
They 're making observations;
While some are cozie i' the neuk,
And formin' assignations
To meet some day.

But now the L—'s ain trumpet touts,
Till a' the hills are rairin',
And echoes back return the shouts —
Black Russell is na sparin':
His piercing words, like Highland swords,
Divide the joints and marrow;
His talk o' hell, whare devils dwell,
Our vera sauls does harrow
Wi' fright that day.

A vast, unbottomed, boundless pit,
Filled fou o' lowin' brunstane,
Wha's ragin' flame, and scorchin' heat,
Wad melt the hardest whunstane!
The half-asleep start up wi' fear,
And think they hear it roarin',
When presently it does appear
'T was but some neebor snorin',
Asleep that day.

'T wad be owre lang a tale to tell
How monie stories past,
And how they crowded to the yill,
When they were a' dismist:
How drink gaed round, in cogs and caups,
Amang the forms and benches:
And cheese and bread, frae women's laps,
Was dealt about in lunches,
And dauds that day.

In comes a gaucy, gash guidwife,
And sits down by the fire,
Syne draws her kebbuck and her knife;

The lasses they are shyer.
The auld guidmen, about the grace,
Frae side to side they bother,
Till some ane by his bonnet lays,
And gies them 't like a tether,
Fu' lang that day.

Waesucks! for him that gets nae lass,
Or lasses that hae naething!
Sma' need has he to say a grace,
Or melvie his braw claithing!
Oh wives, be mindfu' ance yoursel'
How bonny lads ye wanted,
And dinna, for a kebbuck-heel,
Let lasses be affronted
On sic a day!

Now Clinkumbell,[1] wi' rattlin' tow,
Begins to jow and croon;
Some swagger hame, the best they dow,
Some wait the afternoon.
At slaps the billies halt a blink,
Till lasses strip their shoon:
Wi' faith and hope, and love and drink,
They 're a' in famous tune
For crack that day.

How monie hearts this day converts
O' sinners and o' lasses!
Their hearts o' stane, gin night, are gane,
As saft as ony flesh is.
There 's some are fou o' love divine;

[1] Variation — "Now Robin Gib," etc.

There 's some are fou o' brandy ;
And monie jobs that day begin
May end in houghmagandy
Some ither day.

ON A SCOTCH BARD,

GONE TO THE WEST INDIES.

A' YE wha live by sowps o' drink,
A' ye wha live by crambo-clink,
A' ye wha live and never think,
Come, mourn wi' me !
Our billie 's gien us a' a jink,
And owre the sea.

Lament him a' ye rantin' core,
Wha dearly like a random-splore,
Nae mair he 'll join the merry roar
In social key ;
For now he 's ta'en anither shore,
And owre the sea !

Auld cantie Kyle may weepers wear,
And stain them wi' the saut, saut tear ;
'T will mak her poor auld heart, I fear,
In flinders flee ;
He was her laureate monie a year,
That 's owre the sea.

He saw misfortune's cauld nor-west
Lang mustering up a bitter blast ;

A jillet brak his heart at last,
Ill may she be!
So, took a berth afore the mast,
And owre the sea.

To tremble under Fortune's cummock,
On scarce a bellyfu' o' drummock,
Wi' his proud, independent stomach,
Could ill agree;
So row't his hurdies in a hammock,
And owre the sea.

He ne'er was gien to great misguiding,
Yet coin his pouches wadna bide in;
Wi' him it ne'er was under hiding —
He dealt it free:
The Muse was a' that he took pride in,
That 's owre the sea.

Jamaica bodies, use him weel,
And hap him in a cozie biel:
Ye 'll find him aye a dainty chiel,
And fou o' glee;
He wadna wranged the very deil[1],
That 's owre the sea.

Fareweel, my rhyme-composing billie!
Your native soil was right ill-willie;
But may ye flourish like a lily,
Now bonnilie!
I 'll toast ye in my hinmost gillie,
Though owre the sea!

A BARD'S EPITAPH.

IS there a whim-inspirèd fool,
Owre fast for thought, owre hot for rule,
Owre blate to seek, owre proud to snool,
Let him draw near;
And owre this grassy heap sing dool,
And drap a tear.

Is there a bard of rustic song,
Who, noteless, steals the crowds among,
That weekly this aréa throng,
Oh, pass not by!
But, with a frater-feeling strong,
Here heave a sigh.

Is there a man, whose judgment clear,
Can others teach the course to steer,
Yet runs himself life's mad career,
Wild as the wave;
Here pause — and, through the starting tear
Survey this grave.

The poor inhabitant below,
Was quick to learn, and wise to know,
And keenly felt the friendly glow,
And softer flame;
But thoughtless follies laid him low,
And stained his name!

Reader, attend — whether thy soul
Soars fancy's flights beyond the pole,

Or darkling grubs this earthly hole,
In low pursuit;
Know, prudent, cautious self-control
Is wisdom's root.

DEDICATION TO GAVIN HAMILTON, Esq.

EXPECT na, sir, in this narration,
A fleechin, fleth'rin dedication,
To roose you up, and ca' you guid,
And sprung o' great and noble bluid,
Because ye 're surnamed like his Grace;
Perhaps related to the race;
Then when I 'm tired, and sae are ye,
Wi' monie a fulsome, sinfu' lie,
Set up a face, how I stop short,
For fear your modesty be hurt.

This may do — maun do, sir, wi' them wha
Maun please the great folk for a wamefou;
For me! sae laigh I needna bow,
For, L— be thankit, I can plough;
And when I downa yoke a naig,
Then, L— be thankit, I can beg;
Sae I shall say, and that 's nae flatterin',
It 's just sic poet, and sic patron.

The Poet, some guid angel help him,
Or else, I fear, some ill ane skelp him,
He may do weel for a' he 's done yet,
But only he 's no just begun yet.

The Patron (sir, ye maun forgie me,
I winna lie, come what will o' me),
On every hand it will allowed be,
He 's just — nae better than he should be.

I readily and freely grant,
He downa see a poor man want ;
What 's no his ain he winna tak it,
What ance he says he winna break it ;
Ought he can lend he 'll no refus't
Till aft his gudeness is abused ;
And rascals whiles that do him wrang,
Even that, he does na mind it lang :
As master, landlord, husband, father,
He does na fail his part in either.

But then nae thanks to him for a' that,
Nae godly symptom ye can ca' that ;
It 's naething but a milder feature
Of our poor sinfu', córrupt nature :
Ye 'll get the best o' moral works,
'Mang black Gentoos and pagan Turks,
Or hunters wild on Ponotaxi,
Wha never heard of orthodoxy.
That he 's the poor man's friend in need,
The gentleman in word and deed,
It 's no through terror of d——tion ;
It 's just a carnal inclination.

Morality, thou deadly bane,
Thy tens o' thousands thou hast slain !
Vain is his hope whose stay and trust is
In moral mercy, truth, and justice !

No — stretch a point to catch a plack ;
Abuse a brother to his back ;
Steal through a winnock frae a w——,
But point the rake that taks the door ;
Be to the poor like ony whunstane,
And haud their noses to the grunstane ;
Ply every art o' legal thieving ;
No matter — stick to sound believing !

Learn three-mile prayers, and half-mile graces,
Wi' weel-spread looves, and lang wry faces ;
Grunt up a solemn, lengthened groan,
And d— a' parties but your own ;
I 'll warrant, then, ye 're nae deceiver —
A steady, sturdy, stanch believer.

Oh ye wha leave the springs o' Calvin,
For gumlie dubs of your ain delvin' !
Ye sons of heresy and error,
Ye 'll some day squeal in quaking terror !
When Vengeance draws the sword in wrath,
And in the fire throws the sheath ;
When Ruin, with his sweeping besom,
Just frets, till Heaven commission gies him :
While o'er the harp pale Misery moans,
And strikes the ever-deepening tones,
Still louder shrieks, and heavier groans !

Your pardon, sir, for this digression,
I maist forgot my dedication ;
But when divinity comes 'cross me,
My readers still are sure to lose me.

So, sir, ye see 't was nae daft vapour,
But I maturely thought it proper,
When a' my works I did review,
To dedicate them, sir, to you:
Because (ye need na tak it ill)
I thought them something like yoursel'.

Then patronise them wi' your favour,
And your petitioner shall ever ——
I had amaist said, ever pray,
But that 's a word I need na say:
For prayin' I hae little skill o' 't;
I 'm baith dead sweer, and wretched ill o' 't;
But I 'se repeat each poor man's prayer
That kens or hears about you, sir: —

"May ne'er Misfortune's gowling bark
Howl through the dwelling o' the Clerk!
May ne'er his generous, honest heart,
For that same generous spirit smart!
May Kennedy's far-honoured name
Lang beat his hymeneal flame,
Till Hamiltons, at least a dizzen,
Are by their canty fireside risen:
Five bonny lasses round their table,
And seven braw fellows, stout and able,
To serve their king and country weel,
By word, or pen, or pointed steel!
May health and peace, with mutual rays,
Shine on the evening o' his days,
Till his wee curlie John's ier-oe,
When ebbing life nae mair shall flow,
The last, sad mournful rites bestow."

I will not wind a lang conclusion
With complimentary effusion:
But whilst your wishes and endeavours
Are blest wi' fortune's smiles and favours,
I am, dear sir, with zeal most fervent,
Your much indebted, humble servant.

But if (which powers above prevent!)
That iron-hearted carl, Want,
Attended in his grim advances
By sad mistakes and black mischances,
While hopes, and joys, and pleasures fly him,
Make you as poor a dog as I am,
Your humble servant then no more;
For who would humbly serve the poor?
But by a poor man's hopes in Heaven!
While recollection's power is given,
If, in the vale of humble life,
The victim sad of fortune's strife,
I, through the tender-gushing tear,
Should recognise my master dear,
If friendless, low, we meet together,
Then, sir, your hand — my friend and brother!

FAREWELL TO THE BRETHREN OF ST. JAMES'S LODGE, TORBOLTON.

TUNE — *Good-night, and Joy be wi' you a'.*

ADIEU! a heart-warm, fond adieu!
Dear brothers of the *mystic tie!*
Ye favoured, ye *enlightened* few,
Companions of my social joy.

Though I to foreign lands must hie,
Pursuing Fortune's slidd'ry ba',
With melting heart, and brimful eye,
I 'll mind you still, though far awa'.

Oft have I met your social band,
And spent the cheerful, festive night;
Oft, honoured with supreme command,
Presided o'er the *Sons of Light:*
And by that *hieroglyphic* bright
Which none but *Craftsmen* ever saw!
Strong Memory on my heart shall write
Those happy scenes when far awa'.

May Freedom, Harmony, and Love,
Unite you in the *grand design,*
Beneath the Omniscient Eye above,
The glorious Architect Divine!
That you may keep the *unerring line,*
Still rising by the *plummet's law,*
Till Order bright completely shine,
Shall be my prayer when far awa'.

And *you,* farewell! whose merits claim,
Justly, that *highest badge* to wear!
Heaven bless your honoured, noble name,
To *masonry* and *Scotia* dear!
A last request permit me here,
When yearly ye assemble a',
One *round* — I ask it with *a tear* —
To him, *the Bard that 's far awa'.*

ON A PROCESSION OF THE ST. JAMES'S LODGE

FRIDAY first 's the day appointed
By the Right Worshipful anointed,
To hold our grand procession;
To get a blad o' Johnnie's morals,
And taste a swatch o' Manson's barrels,
I' the way of our profession.
The Master and the Brotherhood
Would a' be glad to see you;
For me I would be mair than proud
To share the mercies wi' you.
If Death, then, wi' skaith, then,
Some mortal heart is hechtin',
Inform him, and storm him,
That Saturday you 'll fecht him.

ROBERT BURNS.

THE SONS OF OLD KILLIE.

TUNE—*Shawnboy.*

YE sons of old Killie, assembled by Willie,
To follow the noble vocation;
Your thrifty old mother has scarce such another
To sit in that honourèd station.
I 've little to say, but only to pray,
As praying 's the ton of your fashion;
A prayer from the Muse you well may excuse,
'T is seldom her favourite passion.

Ye powers who preside o'er the wind and the tide,
Who markèd each element's border;

Who formèd this frame with beneficent aim,
Whose sovereign statute is order;
Within this dear mansion may wayward Contention
Or witherèd Envy ne'er enter;
May Secrecy round be the mystical bound,
And Brotherly Love be the centre.

THE BONNIE LASS O' BALLOCHMYLE.

'T WAS even — the dewy fields were green,
On every blade the pearls hang!
The Zephyr wantoned round the bean,
And bore its fragrant sweets alang;
In every glen the mavis sang,
All nature listening seemed the while,
Except where greenwood echoes rang,
Amang the braes o' Ballochmyle.

With careless step I onward strayed,
My heart rejoiced in Nature's joy,
When, musing in a lonely glade,
A maiden fair I chanced to spy.
Her look was like the morning's eye,
Her air like Nature's vernal smile,
Perfection whispered passing by,
Behold the lass o' Ballochmyle![1]

Fair is the morn in flowery May,
And sweet is night in Autumn mild,

[1] Variation —

The lily's hue and rose's dye
Bespoke the lass o' Ballochmyle.

When roving through the garden gay,
Or wandering in the lonely wild:
But woman, Nature's darling child!
There all her charms she does compile;
Even there her other works are foiled
By the bonnie lass o' Ballochmyle.

Oh, had she been a country maid,
And I the happy country swain,
Though sheltered in the lowest shed
That ever rose on Scotland's plain,
Through weary winter's wind and rain,
With joy, with rapture, I would toil,
And nightly to my bosom strain
The bonnie lass o' Ballochmyle.

Then pride might climb the slippery steep,
Where fame and honours lofty shine;
And thirst of gold might tempt the deep,
Or downward seek the Indian mine;
Give me the cot below the pine,
To tend the flocks, or till the soil,
And every day has joys divine
With the bonnie lass o' Ballochmyle.

TO MR. JOHN KENNEDY.

FAREWELL, dear friend! may guid-luck hit you,
And 'mang her favourites admit you.

If e'er Detraction shore to smit you,
May nane believe him,
And ony deil that thinks to get you,
Good L—, deceive him.

THE FAREWELL.

"The valiant, in himself, what can he suffer?
Or what does he regard his single woes?
But when, alas! he multiplies himself,
To dearer selves, to the loved tender fair,
To those whose bliss, whose being hangs upon him,
To helpless children! — then, oh then! he feels
The point of misery festering in his heart,
And weakly weeps his fortune like a coward.
Such, such am I! undone!"

THOMSON'S *Edward and Eleanora.*

FAREWELL, Old Scotia's bleak domains,
Far dearer than the torrid plains
Where rich ananas blow!
Farewell, a mother's blessing dear!
A brother's sigh! a sister's tear!
My Jean's heart-rending throe!
Farewell, my Bess! though thou 'rt bereft
Of my parental care,
A faithful brother I have left,
My part in him thou 'lt share!
Adieu too, to you too,
My Smith, my bosom frien';
When kindly you mind me,
Oh then befriend my Jean!

What bursting anguish tears my heart!
From thee, my Jeanie, must I part?

Thou, weeping, answ'rest "No!"
Alas! misfortune stares my face,
And points to ruin and disgrace;
I for thy sake must go!
Thee, Hamilton, and Aiken dear,
A grateful, warm adieu!
I, with a much-indebted tear,
Shall still remember you!
All-hail then, the gale then,
Wafts me from thee, dear shore!
It rustles, and whistles —
I'll never see thee more!

LINES WRITTEN ON A BANK-NOTE.[1]

WAE worth thy power, thou cursed leaf,
Fell source o' a' my wo and grief:
For lack o' thee I've lost my lass,
For lack o' thee I scrimp my glass;
I see the children of affliction
Unaided, through thy cursed restriction.
I've seen the oppressor's cruel smile
Amid his hapless victim's spoil,
And, for thy potence, vainly wished
To crush the villain in the dust.
For lack o' thee I leave this much-loved shore,
Never perhaps to greet old Scotland more.

R. B. — Kyle.

1 "The above verses, in the handwriting of Burns, are copied from a bank-note, in the possession of Mr. James F. Gracie of Dumfries. The note is of the Bank of Scotland, and is dated so far back as 1st March, 1780." — MOTHERWELL.

WRITTEN

ON A BLANK LEAF OF A COPY OF THE POEMS PRESENTED TO AN OLD SWEETHEART, THEN MARRIED.

ONCE fondly loved, and still remembered dear,
Sweet early object of my youthful vows!
Accept this mark of friendship, warm, sincere —
Friendship! 't is all cold duty now allows.

And when you read the simple artless rhymes,
One friendly sigh for him — he asks no more,
Who distant burns in flaming torrid climes,
Or haply lies beneath the Atlantic's roar.

VERSES WRITTEN UNDER VIOLENT GRIEF.

ACCEPT the gift a friend sincere
Wad on thy worth be pressin';
Remembrance oft may start a tear,
But oh! that tenderness forbear,
Though 't wad my sorrows lessen.

My morning raise sae clear and fair,
I thought sair storms wad never
Bedew the scene; but grief and care
In wildest fury hae made bare
My peace, my hope, for ever!

You think I 'm glad; oh, I pay weel
For a' the joy I borrow,
In solitude — then, then I feel
I canna to mysel' conceal
My deeply-ranklin' sorrow.

Farewell! within thy bosom free
A sigh may whiles awaken;
A tear may wet thy laughin' e'e,
For Scotia's son — ance gay like thee —
Now hopeless, comfortless, forsaken!

THE CALF.

TO THE REV. MR. JAMES STEVEN,

On his Text, *Malachi* iv. 2. — "And ye shall go forth, and grow up as CALVES of the stall."

RIGHT, sir! your text I 'll prove it true,
Though heretics may laugh;
For instance, there 's yoursel' just now,
God knows, an unco calf!

And should some patron be so kind,
As bless you wi' a kirk,
I doubt na, sir, but then we 'll find
Ye 're still as great a stirk.

But if the lover's raptured hour
Shall ever be your lot,
Forbid it, every heavenly power,
You e'er should be a stot!

Though, when some kind, connubial dear,
Your but-and-ben adorns,
The like has been that you may wear
A noble head of horns.

And in your lug, most reverend James,
To hear you roar and rowte,
Few men o' sense will doubt your claims
To rank amang the nowte.

And when ye 're numbered wi' the dead,
Below a grassy hillock,
Wi' justice they may mark your head —
"Here lies a famous bullock!"

WILLIE CHALMERS.

WI' braw new branks in mickle pride,
And eke a braw new brechan,
My Pegasus I 'm got astride,
And up Parnassus pechin';
Whiles owre a bush wi' downward crush,
The doited beastie stammers;
Then up he gets, and off he sets,
For sake o' Willie Chalmers.

I doubt na, lass, that weel-kenned name
May cost a pair o' blushes;
I am nae stranger to your fame,
Nor his warm urgèd wishes.
Your bonny face sae mild and sweet,
His honest heart enamours,

And faith ye 'll no be lost a whit,
Though waired on Willie Chalmers.

Auld Truth hersel' might swear ye 're fair,
And Honour safely back her,
And Modesty assume your air,
And ne'er a ane mistak' her:
And sic twa love-inspiring een
Might fire even holy palmers;
Nae wonder, then, they 've fatal been
To honest Willie Chalmers.

I doubt na fortune may you shore
Some mim-mou'd pouthered priestie,
Fu' lifted up wi' Hebrew lore,
And band upon his breastie:
But oh! what signifies to you
His lexicons and grammars;
The feeling heart 's the royal blue,
And that 's wi' Willie Chalmers.

Some gapin' glowrin' country laird
May warsle for your favour;
May claw his lug, and straik his beard,
And hoast up some palaver.
My bonny maid, before ye wed
Sic clumsy-witted hammers,
Seek Heaven for help, and barefit skelp
Awa' wi' Willie Chalmers.

Forgive the Bard! my fond regard
For ane that shares my bosom,
Inspires my Muse to gie 'm his dues,

For deil a hair I roose him.
May powers aboon unite you soon,
And fructify your amours,
And every year come in mair dear
To you and Willie Chalmers.

TAM SAMSON'S ELEGY.

"An honest man 's the noblest work of God." — POPE.

HAS auld Kilmarnock seen the deil?
Or great M'Kinlay thrawn his heel?
Or Robertson again grown weel
To preach and read?
"Na, waur than a'!" cries ilka chiel —
Tam Samson 's dead!

Kilmarnock lang may grunt and grane,
And sigh, and sob, and greet her lane,
And cleed her bairns, man, wife, and wean,
In mourning weed;
To Death she 's dearly paid the kane —
Tam Samson 's dead!

The brethren o' the mystic level
May hing their head in woefu' bevel,
While by their nose the tears will revel,
Like ony bead;
Death 's gien the lodge an unco devel —
Tam Samson 's dead!

When Winter muffles up his cloak,
And binds the mire like a rock;

When to the loch the curlers flock,
Wi' gleesome speed,
Wha will they station at the cock? —
Tam Samson 's dead!

He was the king o' a' the core,
To guard, or draw, or wick a bore,
Or up the rink like Jehu roar
In time o' need;
But now he lags on Death's hog-score —
Tam Samson 's dead!

Now safe the stately sawmont sail,
And trouts be-dropped wi' crimson hail,
And eels weel kenned for souple tail,
And geds for greed,
Since dark in Death's fish-creel we wail
Tam Samson dead!

Rejoice, ye birring paitricks a';
Ye cootie moorcocks crously craw;
Ye maukins, cock your fud fu' braw,
Withouten dread;
Your mortal fae is now awa' —
Tam Samson 's dead!

That woefu' morn be ever mourned
Saw him in shootin' graith adorned,
While pointers round impatient burned,
Frae couples freed;
But, och! he gaed, and ne'er returned! —
Tam Samson 's dead!

In vain auld age his body batters;
In vain the gout his ankles fetters;
In vain the burns cam' down like waters
An acre braid!
Now every auld wife, greetin', clatters
Tam Samson's dead!

Owre many a weary hag he limpit,
And aye the tither shot he thumpit,
Till coward Death behind him jumpit,
Wi' deadly feide;
Now he proclaims, wi' tout o' trumpet,
Tam Samson's dead!

When at his heart he felt the dagger,
He reeled his wonted bottle-swagger,
But yet he drew the mortal trigger
Wi' weel-aimed heed;
"L—, five!" he cried, and owre did stagger —
Tam Samson's dead!

Ilk hoary hunter mourned a brither;
Ilk sportsman youth bemoaned a father;
Yon auld gray stane, amang the heather,
Marks out his head,
Where Burns has wrote, in rhyming blether,
Tam Samson's dead!

There low he lies, in lasting rest;
Perhaps upon his mouldering breast
Some spitefu' muirfowl bigs her nest,
To hatch and breed;

Alas! nae mair he 'll them molest! —
Tam Samson 's dead!

When August winds the heather wave,
And sportsmen wander by yon grave,
Three volleys let his memory crave
O' pouther and lead,
Till Echo answer frae her cave,
Tam Samson 's dead!

Heaven rest his saul, where'er he be!
Is th' wish o' monie mae than me;
He had twa fauts, or maybe three,
Yet what remead?
Ae social, honest man want we:
Tam Samson 's dead!

EPITAPH.

Tam Samson's weel-worn clay here lies,
Ye canting zealots spare him;
If honest worth in heaven rise,
Ye 'll mend or ye win near him.

PER CONTRA.

Go, Fame, and canter like a fillie
Through a' the streets and neuks o' Killie;
Tell every social, honest billie
To cease his grievin',
For yet, unskaithed by Death's gleg gullie,
Tam Samson 's leevin'!

TO MR. M'ADAM OF CRAIGENGILLAN.

SIR, o'er a gill I gat your card,
I trow it made me proud;
"See wha taks notice o' the Bard!"
I lap and cried fu' loud.

Now diel-ma-care about their jaw,
The senseless, gawky million:
I'll cock my nose aboon them a'—
I'm roosed by Craigengillan!

'T was noble, sir; 't was like yoursel'
To grant your high protection:
A great man's smile, ye ken fu' well,
Is aye a blest infection;—

Though, by his banes who in a tub
Matched Macedonian Sandy!
On my ain legs, through dirt and dub,
I independent stand aye.

And when those legs to guid warm kail,
Wi' welcome canna bear me,
A lee dike-side, a sybow-tail,
And barley-scone, shall cheer me.

Heaven spare you lang to kiss the breath
O' many flowery simmers!
And bless your bonny lasses baith—
I'm tauld they 're lo'esome kimmers!

And God bless young Dunaskin's laird,
The blossom of our gentry,
And may he wear an auld man's beard,
A credit to his country!

LYING AT A FRIEND'S HOUSE ONE NIGHT, THE AUTHOR LEFT THE FOLLOWING

VERSES

IN THE ROOM WHERE HE SLEPT.

OH thou dread Power who reign'st above,
I know thou wilt me hear,
When for this scene of peace and love
I make my prayer sincere!

The hoary sire — the mortal stroke,
Long, long be pleased to spare,
To bless his filial little flock,
And shew what good men are.

She, who her lovely offspring eyes
With tender hopes and fears,
Oh bless her with a mother's joys,
But spare a mother's tears!

Their hope, their stay, their darling youth,
In manhood's dawning blush —
Bless him, thou God of love and truth,
Up to a parent's wish!

The beauteous, seraph sister-band,
With earnest tears I pray,
Thou know'st the snares on every hand —
Guide thou their steps alway.

When soon or late they reach that coast,
O'er life's rough ocean driven,
May they rejoice, no wanderer lost —
A family in heaven![1]

THE GLOOMY NIGHT IS GATHERING FAST

TUNE — *Roslin Castle.*

THE gloomy night is gathering fast,
Loud roars the wild inconstant blast;
Yon murky cloud is foul with rain,
I see it driving o'er the plain.
The hunter now has left the moor,
The scattered coveys meet secure;
While here I wander, pressed with care,
Along the lonely banks of Ayr.

1 Miss Louisa Lawrie possessed a scrap of verse in the poet's handwriting — a mere trifle, but apparently intended as part of a lyric description of the manse festivities. Some little license must be granted to the poet with respect to his lengthening the domestic dance so far into the night.

The night was still, and o'er the hill
The moon shone on the castle wa';
The mavis sang, while dew-drops hang
Around her, on the castle wa'.

Sae merrily they danced the ring,
Frae eenin' till the cock did craw;
And aye the o'erword o' the spring,
Was Irvine's bairns are bonny a'

The Autumn mourns her ripening corn,
By early Winter's ravage torn;
Across her placid, azure sky,
She sees the scowling tempest fly;
Chill runs my blood to hear it rave —
I think upon the stormy wave,
Where many a danger I must dare,
Far from the bonny banks of Ayr.

'T is not the surging billow's roar,
'T is not that fatal deadly shore;
Though death in every shape appear,
The wretched have no more to fear!
But round my heart the ties are bound,
That heart transpierced with many a wound;
These bleed afresh, those ties I tear,
To leave the bonny banks of Ayr.

Farewell old Coila's hills and dales,
Her heathy moors and winding vales;
The scenes where wretched fancy roves,
Pursuing past, unhappy loves!
Farewell, my friends! farewell, my foes!
My peace with these, my love with those:
The bursting tears my heart declare;
Farewell the bonny banks of Ayr!

THE BRIGS OF AYR.

INSCRIBED TO JOHN BALLANTYNE, ESQ., AYR.

THE simple Bard, rough at the rustic plough,
Learning his tuneful trade from every bough;
The chanting linnet, or the mellow thrush,

Hailing the setting sun, sweet, in the green thorn-
bush;
The soaring lark, the perching redbreast shrill,
Or deep-toned plovers, gray, wild-whistling o'er
the hill;
Shall he, nurst in the peasant's lowly shed,
To hardy independence bravely bred,
By early poverty to hardship steeled,
And trained to arms in stern misfortune's field —
Shall he be guilty of their hireling crimes,
The servile, mercenary Swiss of rhymes?
Or labour hard the panegyric close,
With all the venal soul of dedicating prose?
No! though his artless strains he rudely sings,
And throws his hand uncouthly o'er the strings,
He glows with all the spirit of the Bard,
Fame, honest Fame, his great, his dear reward!
Still, if some patron's generous care he trace,
Skilled in the secret to bestow with grace,
When Ballantyne befriends his humble name,
And hands the rustic stranger up to Fame,
With heartfelt throes his grateful bosom swells,
The godlike bliss, to give, alone excels.

'T was when the stacks get on their winter hap,
And thack and rape secure the toil-won crap;
Potato bings are snuggèd up frae skaith
Of coming Winter's biting, frosty breath;
The bees, rejoicing o'er their summer toils,
Unnumbered buds' and flowers' delicious spoils
Sealed up with frugal care in massive waxen piles,
Are doomed by man, that tyrant o'er the weak,
The death o' devils smoored wi' brimstone reek:

The thundering guns are heard on every side,
The wounded coveys, reeling, scatter wide;
The feathered field-mates, bound by Nature's tie,
Sires, mothers, children, in one carnage lie;
(What warm, poetic heart, but inly bleeds,
And execrates man's savage, ruthless deeds;)
Nae mair the flower in field or meadow springs;
Nae mair the grove with airy concert rings,
Except, perhaps, the robin's whistling glee,
Proud o' the height o' some bit half-lang tree;
The hoary morns precede the sunny days,
Mild, calm, serene, wide spreads the noontide blaze,
While thick the gossamour waves wanton in the
rays.

'T was in that season, when a simple Bard,
Unknown and poor, Simplicity's reward,
Ae night, within the ancient brugh of Ayr,
By whim inspired, or haply prest wi' care,
He left his bed, and took his wayward route,
And down by Simpson's wheeled the left-about:
(Whether impelled by all-directing Fate,
To witness what I after shall narrate;[1]
Or whether, rapt in meditation high,
He wandered out he knew not where or why.)

The drowsy Dungeon-clock had numbered two,
And Wallace Tower had sworn the fact was true;
The tide-swoln Firth, with sullen sounding roar,

[1] In a MS. copy, here occur two lines omitted in print:

"Or penitential pangs for former sins
Led him to rove by quondam Merran Din's."

Through the still night dashed hoarse along the
shore.
All else was hushed as Nature's closed e'e;
The silent moon shone high o'er tower and tree;
The chilly frost, beneath the silver beam,
Crept, gently-crusting, o'er the glittering stream;—
When lo! on either hand the listening Bard,
The clanging sugh of whisfling wings is heard;
Two dusky forms dart through the midnight air,
Swift as the gos drives on the wheeling hare.

Ane on the Auld Brig his airy shape uprears,
The ither flutters o'er the rising piers:
Our warlock Rhymer instantly descried
The Sprites that owre the Brigs of Ayr preside.
(That Bards are second-sighted is nae joke,
And ken the lingo of the sp'ritual folk;
Fays, Spunkies, Kelpies, a', they can explain them,
And even the very deils they brawly ken them.)
Auld Brig appeared of ancient Pictish race,
The very wrinkles Gothic in his face:
He seemed as he wi' Time had warstl'd lang,
Yet, teughly doure, he bade an unco bang.
New Brig was buskit in a braw new coat
That he at Lon'on, frae ane Adams, got;
In 's hand five taper staves as smooth 's a bead,
Wi' virls and whirlygigums at the head.
The Goth was stalking round with anxious search,
Spying the time-worn flaws in every arch;
It chanced his new-come neebor took his e'e,
And e'en a vexed and angry heart had he!
Wi' thieveless sneer to see his modish mien,
He, down the water, gies him this guid-e'en: —

AULD BRIG.

I doubt na, frien', ye 'll think ye 're nae sheep-shank,
Ance ye were streekit o'er frae bank to bank,
But gin ye be a brig as auld as me —
Though, faith, that day I doubt ye 'll never see —
There 'll be, if that date come, I 'll wad a boddle,
Some fewer whigmaleeries in your noddle.

NEW BRIG.

Auld Vandal, ye but shew your little mense,
Just much about it wi' your scanty sense.
Will your poor, narrow footpath of a street —
Whare twa wheel-barrows tremble when they meet —
Your ruined, formless bulk o' stane and lime,
Compare wi' bonny brigs o' modern time ?
There 's men o' taste would tak the Ducat Stream,
Though they should cast the very sark and swim,
Ere they would grate their feelings wi' the view
Of sic an ugly Gothic hulk as you.

AULD BRIG.

Conceited gowk, puffed up wi' windy pride !
This monie a year I 've stood the flood and tide ;
And though wi' crazy eild I 'm sair forfairn,
I 'll be a Brig when ye 're a shapeless cairn !
As yet ye little ken about the matter,
But twa-three winters will inform ye better.
When heavy, dark, continued, a'-day rains,

Wi' deepening deluges o'erflow the plains;
When from the hills where springs the brawling
Coil,
Or stately Lugar's mossy fountains boil,
Or where the Greenock winds his moorland course,
Or haunted Garpal draws his feeble source,
Aroused by blustering winds and spotting thowes,
In monie a torrent down his snaw-broo rowes;
While crashing ice, borne on the roaring speat,
Sweeps dams, and mills, and brigs, a' to the gate;
And from Glenbuck down to the Ratton-key
Auld Ayr is just one lengthened tumbling sea —
Then down ye 'll hurl, deil nor ye never rise!
And dash the gumlie jaups up to the pouring skies:
A lesson sadly teaching, to your cost,
That Architecture's noble art is lost!

NEW BRIG.

Fine Architecture, trowth, I needs must say 't
o' 't!
The L— be thankit that we 've tint the gate o' 't!
Gaunt, ghastly, ghaist-alluring edifices,
Hanging with threatening jut, like precipices;
O'erarching, mouldy, gloom-inspiring coves,
Supporting roofs fantastic, stony groves:
Windows, and doors in nameless sculpture drest,
With order, symmetry, or taste unblest;
Forms like some bedlam statuary's dream,
The crazed creations of misguided whim;
Forms might be worshipped on the bended knee,
And still the second dread command be free,
Their likeness is not found on earth, in air, or sea.

Mansions that would disgrace the building taste
Of any mason reptile, bird or beast;
Fit only for a doited monkish race,
Or frosty maids forsworn the dear embrace;
Or cuits of latter times, wha held the notion
That sullen gloom was sterling true devotion;
Fancies that our good Brugh denies protection!
And soon may they expire, unblest with resurrection!

AULD BRIG.

Oh ye, my dear remembered ancient yealings,
Were ye but here to share my wounded feelings!
Ye worthy Proveses, and monie a Bailie,
Wha in the paths o' righteousness did toil aye;
Ye dainty Deacons and ye douce Conveeners,
To whom our moderns are but causey-cleaners;
Ye godly Councils wha hae blest this town;
Ye godly brethren o' the sacred gown,
Wha meekly ga'e your hurdies to the smiters;
And (what would now be strange) ye godly writers;
A' ye douce folk I 've borne aboon the broo,
Were ye but here, what would ye say or do!
How would your spirits groan in deep vexation,
To see each melancholy alteration;
And agonising, curse the time and place
When ye begat the base degenerate race!
Nae langer reverend men, their country's glory,
In plain braid Scots hold forth a plain braid story!
Nae langer thrifty citizens and douce,
Meet owre a pint, or in the council-house;

But staumrel, corky-headed, graceless gentry,
The herryment and ruin of the country;
Men three parts made by tailors and by barbers,
Wha waste your weel-hained gear on d—— new
brigs and harbours!

NEW BRIG.

Now haud you there, for faith you've said
enough,
And muckle mair than ye can mak to through.[1]
As for your Priesthood I shall say but little,
Corbies and Clergy are a shot right kittle:
But, under favour o' your langer beard,
Abuse o' magistrates might weel be spared.
To liken them to your auld-warld squad,
I must needs say comparisons are odd.
In Ayr, wag-wits nae mair can hae a handle
To mouth "a citizen," a term o' scandal;
Nae mair the Council waddles down the street,
In all the pomp of ignorant conceit.[2]
Men wha grew wise priggin' owre hops and raisins,
Or gathered liberal views in bonds and seisins;
If haply Knowledge, on a random tramp,
Had shored them with a glimmer of his lamp,

1 Inserted in MS. copy:

"That 's aye a string auld doited Graybeards harp on,
A topic for their peevishness to carp on."

2 Variation in MS.:

"Nae mair down street the Council quorum waddles,
With wigs like mainsails on their logger noddles;
No difference but bulkiest or tallest,
With comfortable dulness in for ballast:
Nor shoals nor currents need a pilot's caution,
For regularly slow, they only witness motion."

And would to Common-sense for once betrayed them,
Plain, dull Stupidity stept kindly in to aid them.

What further clish-ma-claver might been said,
What bloody wars, if sprites had blood to shed,
No man can tell; but all before their sight,
A fairy train appeared in order bright;
Adown the glittering stream they featly danced;
Bright to the moon their various dresses glanced;
They footed o'er the watery glass so neat,
The infant ice scarce bent beneath their feet;
While arts of minstrelsy among them rung,
And soul-ennobling bards heroic ditties sung.
Oh had M'Lachlan, thairm-inspiring sage,
Been there to hear this heavenly band engage,
When through his dear strathspeys they bore with Highland rage;
Or when they struck old Scotia's melting airs,
The lover's raptured joys or bleeding cares;
How would his Highland lug been nobler fired,
And even his matchless hand with finer touch inspired!
No guess could tell what instrument appeared,
But all the soul of Music's self was heard;
Harmonious concert rung in every part,
While simple melody poured moving on the heart.

The Genius of the stream in front appears,
A venerable chief advanced in years;
His hoary head with water-lilies crowned,
His manly leg with garter tangle bound.

Next came the loveliest pair in all the ring,
Sweet Female Beauty hand in hand with Spring;
Then, crowned with flowery hay, came Rural Joy,
And Summer, with his fervid-beaming eye;
All-cheering Plenty, with her flowing horn,
Led yellow Autumn, wreathed with nodding corn;
Then Winter's time-bleached locks did hoary show,
By Hospitality with cloudless brow;
Next followed Courage, with his martial stride,
From where the Feal wild woody coverts hide;
Benevolence, with mild, benignant air,
A female form, came from the towers of Stair;
Learning and Worth in equal measures trode
From simple Catrine, their long-loved abode:
Last, white-robed Peace, crowned with a hazel wreath,
To rustic Agriculture did bequeath
The broken iron instruments of death;
At sight of whom our Sprites forgat their kindling wrath.

LINES ON MEETING WITH BASIL, LORD DAER.

THIS wot ye all whom it concerns,
I, Rhymer Robin, alias Burns,
October twenty-third,
A ne'er-to-be-forgotten day,
Sae far I sprachled up the brae,
I dinner'd wi' a Lord.

I've been at drucken writers' feasts,
Nay, been bitch-fou 'mang godly priests,

Wi' reverence be it spoken ;
I've even joined the honoured jorum,
When mighty squireships of the quorum
Their hydra drouth did sloken.

But wi' a Lord ! — stand out my shin,
A Lord — a Peer — an Earl's son !
Up higher yet my bonnet !
And sic a Lord ! — lang Scotch ells twa,
Our Peerage he o'erlooks them a',
As I look o'er my sonnet.

But oh for Hogarth's magic power !
To shew Sir Bardie's willyart glower,
And how he stared and stammer'd,
When goavan, as if led wi' branks,
And stumpin' on his ploughman shanks,
He in the parlour hammer'd.

I sidling sheltered in a nook,
And at his Lordship steal't a look,
Like some portentous omen ;
Except good sense and social glee,
And (what surprised me) modesty,
I markèd nought uncommon.

I watched the symptoms o' the great,
The gentle pride, the lordly state,
The arrogant assuming ;
The fient a pride, nae pride had he,
Nor sauce, nor state, that I could see,
Mair than an honest ploughman.

Then from his lordship I shall learn
Henceforth to meet with unconcern
One rank as weel 's anither;
Nae honest worthy man need care
To meet with noble youthful Daer,
For he but meets a brother.

EPISTLE TO MAJOR LOGAN.

HAIL, thairm-inspirin', rattlin' Willie!
Though Fortune's road be rough and hilly
To every fiddling, rhyming billie,
We never heed,
But take it like the unbacked filly,
Proud o' her speed.

When idly goavan whyles we saunter,
Yirr, fancy barks, awa' we canter
Uphill, down brae, till some mischanter,
Some black bog-hole,
Arrests us, then the scaith and banter
We 're forced to thole.

Hale be your heart! — hale be your fiddle!
Lang may your elbock jink and diddle,
To cheer you through the weary widdle
O' this wild warl',
Until you on a crummock driddle
A gray-haired carle.

Come wealth, come poortith, late or soon,
Heaven send your heart-strings aye in tune,

And screw your temper-pins aboon,
A fifth or mair,
The melancholious, lazy croon,
O' cankrie care.

May still your life from day to day
Nae "lente largo" in the play,
But "allegretto forte" gay
Harmonious flow,
A sweeping, kindling, bauld Strathspey —
Encore! Bravo!

A blessing on the cheery gang
Wha dearly like a jig or sang,
And never think o' right and wrang
By square and rule,
But as the clegs o' feeling stang,
Are wise or fool.

My hand-waled curse keep hard in chase
The harpy, hoodock, purse-proud race,
Wha count on poortith as disgrace!
Their tuneless hearts —
May fireside discords jar a base
To a' their parts!

But come, your hand, my careless brither,
I' th' ither warl', if there 's anither —
And that there is I 've little swither
About the matter —
We cheek for chow shall jog thegither;
I 'se ne'er bid better.

We 've faults and failings — granted clearly,
We 're frail backsliding mortals merely,
Eve's bonny squad priests wyte them sheerly
For our grand fa';
But still, but still — I like them dearly —
God bless them a'!

Ochon for poor Castalian drinkers,
When they fa' foul o' earthly jinkers,
The witching cursed delicious blinkers
Hae put me hyte,
And gart me weet my waukrife winkers
Wi' girnin' spite.

But by yon moon! — and that 's high swearin' —
And every star within my hearin'!
And by her een wha was a dear ane!
I 'll ne'er forget;
I hope to gie the jads a clearin'
In fair-play yet.

My loss I mourn, but not repent it,
I 'll seek my pursie whare I tint it;
Ance to the Indies I were wonted,
Some cantrip hour,
By some sweet elf I 'll yet be dinted,
Then, *vive l'amour!*

Faites mes baise-mains respectueuses,
To sentimental sister Susie,
And honest Lucky; no to roose you,
Ye may be proud,

That sic a couple Fate allows ye
To grace your blood.

Nae mair at present can I measure,
And trowth, my rhymin' ware 's nae treasure;
But when in Ayr, some half-hour's leisure,
Be 't light, be 't dark,
Sir Bard will do himself the pleasure
To call at Park.

AN EXPOSTULATION ON A REBUKE ADMINISTERED BY MRS. LAWRIE.

RUSTICITY'S ungainly form
May cloud the highest mind;
But when the heart is nobly warm,
The good excuse will find.

Propriety's cold cautious rules
Warm Fervour may o'erlook;
But spare poor Sensibility
The ungentle, harsh rebuke.

ADDRESS TO EDINBURGH.

EDINA! Scotia's darling seat!
All hail thy palaces and towers,
Where once beneath a monarch's feet
Sat Legislation's sovereign powers!
From marking wildly-scattered flowers,
As on the banks of Ayr I strayed,

And singing, lone, the lingering hours,
I shelter in thy honoured shade.

Here wealth still swells the golden tide,
As busy Trade his labour plies;
There Architecture's noble pride
Bids elegance and splendour rise;
Here Justice, from her native skies,
High wields her balance and her rod;
There Learning, with his eagle eyes,
Seeks Science in her coy abode.

Thy sons, Edina! social, kind,
With open arms the stranger hail;
Their views enlarged, their liberal mind,
Above the narrow, rural vale;
Attentive still to Sorrow's wail,
Or modest Merit's silent claim;
And never may their sources fail!
And never envy blot their name!

Thy daughters bright thy walks adorn,
Gay as the gilded summer sky,
Sweet as the dewy milk-white thorn,
Dear as the raptured thrill of joy!
Fair Burnet strikes th' adoring eye,
Heaven's beauties on my fancy shine;
I see the Sire of Love on high,
And own his work indeed divine!

There, watching high the least alarms,
Thy rough, rude fortress gleams afar;
Like some bold veteran, gray in arms,

And marked with many a seamy scar.
The ponderous wall and massy bar,
Grim-rising o'er the rugged rock,
Have oft withstood assailing war,
And oft repelled the invader's shock.

With awe-struck thought, and pitying tears,
I view that noble, stately dome,
Where Scotia's kings of other years,
Famed heroes! had their royal home.
Alas, how changed the times to come
Their royal name low in the dust!
Their hapless race wild wandering roam,
Though rigid law cries out, 'T was just!

Wild beats my heart to trace your steps,
Whose ancestors, in days of yore,
Through hostile ranks and ruined gaps
Old Scotia's bloody lion bore.
Even I who sing in rustic lore,
Haply, my sires have left their shed,
And faced grim danger's loudest roar,
Bold-following where your fathers led!

Edina! Scotia's darling seat!
All hail thy palaces and towers,
Where once beneath a monarch's feet
Sat Legislation's sovereign powers!
From marking wildly-scattered flowers,
As on the banks of Ayr I strayed,
And singing, lone, the lingering hours,
I shelter in thy honoured shade.

ODE ON THE CHEVALIER'S BIRTHDAY.

. . . . . .

FALSE flatterer, Hope, away!
Nor think to lure us as in days of yore;
We solemnise this sorrowing natal-day
To prove our loyal truth; we can no more;
And owning Heaven's mysterious sway,
Submissive low adore.

Ye honoured mighty dead!
Who nobly perished in the glorious cause,
Your king, your country, and her laws!
From great Dundee who smiling victory led,
And fell a martyr in her arms
(What breast of northern ice but warms?)
To bold Balmerino's undying name,
Whose soul of fire, lighted at heaven's high flame,
Deserves the proudest wreath departed heroes claim.

Nor unavenged your fate shall be,
It only lags the fatal hour;
Your blood shall with incessant cry
Awake at last th' unsparing power;
As from the cliff, with thundering course,
The snowy ruin smokes along,
With doubling speed and gathering force,
Till deep it crashing whelms the cottage in the vale!

So vengeance . . . . . .

TO MISS LOGAN WITH BEATTIE'S POEMS:

AS A NEW-YEAR'S GIFT, JANUARY 1, 1787.

AGAIN the silent wheels of time
Their annual round have driven,
And you, though scarce in maiden prime,
Are so much nearer heaven.

No gifts have I from Indian coasts
The infant year to hail;
I send you more than India boasts
In Edwin's simple tale.

Our sex with guile and faithless love
Is charged, perhaps, too true;
But may, dear maid, each lover prove
An Edwin still to you!

BONNIE DOON.

YE flowery banks o' bonnie Doon,
How can ye bloom sae fair!
How can ye chant, ye little birds,
And I sae fu' o' care!

Thou 'll break my heart, thou bonnie bird,
That sings upon the bough;
Thou minds me o' the happy days
When my fause luve was true.

Thou 'll break my heart, thou bonnie bird,
That sings beside thy mate;
For sae I sat, and sae I sang,
And wistna o' my fate.

Aft hae I roved by bonnie Doon,
To see the woodbine twine,
And ilka bird sang o' its love,
And sae did I o' mine.

Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose
Frae aff its thorny tree,
And my fause luver staw the rose,
But left the thorn wi' me.

THE GUDEWIFE OF WAUCHOPE-HOUSE TO BURNS.

MY cantie, witty, rhyming ploughman,
I hafflins doubt it is na true, man,
That ye between the stilts was bred,
Wi' ploughmen schooled, wi' ploughmen fed;
I doubt it sair, ye 've drawn your knowledge
Either frae grammar-school or college.
Guid troth, your saul and body baith
War better fed, I 'd gie my aith,
Than theirs who sup sour milk and parritch,
And bummil through the single Carritch.
Whaever heard the ploughman speak,
Could tell gif Homer was a Greek?
He 'd flee as soon upon a cudgel,

As get a single line of Virgil.
And then sae slee ye crack your jokes
O' Willie Pitt and Charlie Fox,
Our great men a' sae weel descrive,
And how to gar the nation thrive,
Ane maist wad swear ye dwalt amang them,
And as ye saw them, sae ye sang them.
But be ye ploughman, be ye peer,
Ye are a funny blade, I swear;
And though the cauld I ill can bide,
Yet twenty miles and mair I 'd ride
O'er moss and moor, and never grumble,
Though my auld yad should gie a stumble,
To crack a winter night wi' thee,
And hear thy sangs and sonnets slee.
Oh gif I kenn'd but whare ye baide,
I 'd send to you a marled plaid;
'T wad haud your shouthers warm and braw,
And douce at kirk or market shaw;
Fra' south as weel as north, my lad,
A' honest Scotsmen lo'e the maud.

BURNS TO THE GUDEWIFE OF WAUCHOPE-HOUSE.

I MIND it weel in early date,
When I was beardless, young, and blate,
And first could thrash the barn,
Or haud a yokin' at the pleugh,
And though forfoughten sair eneugh,

Yet unco proud to learn:
When first among the yellow corn
A man I reckoned was,
And wi' the lave ilk merry morn
Could rank my rig and lass,
Still shearing, and clearing,
The tither stookèd raw,
Wi' claivers, and haivers,
Wearing the day awa'.

E'en then, a wish, I mind its power —
A wish that to my latest hour
Shall strongly heave my breast —
That I, for poor auld Scotland's sake,
Some usefu' plan or beuk could make,
Or sing a sang at least.
The rough burr-thissle, spreading wide
Amang the bearded bear,
I turned the weeder-clips aside,
And spared the symbol dear!
No nation, no station,
My envy e'er could raise,
A Scot still, but blot still,
I knew nae higher praise.

But still the elements o' sang,
In formless jumble, right and wrang,
Wild floated in my brain;
Till on that har'st I said before,
My partner in the merry core,
She roused the forming strain.
I see her yet, the sonsie quean,
That lighted up my jingle,

Her witching smile, her pauky een
That gart my heart-strings tingle:
I firèd, inspirèd,
At every kindling keek,
But bashing, and dashing,
I fearèd aye to speak.

Health to the sex, ilk guid chiel says,
Wi' merry dance in winter days,
And we to share in common:
The gust o' joy, the balm of wo,
The saul o' life, the heaven below,
Is rapture-giving woman.
Ye surly sumphs, who hate the name,
Be mindfu' o' your mither;
She, honest woman, may think shame
That ye 're connected with her.
Ye 're wae men, ye 're nae men
That slight the lovely dears;
To shame ye, disclaim ye,
Ilk honest birkie swears.

For you, no bred to barn and byre,
Wha sweetly tune the Scottish lyre,
Thanks to you for your line:
The marled plaid ye kindly spare,
By me should gratefully be ware;
'T wad please me to the Nine.
I'd be mair vauntie o' my hap,
Douce hingin' owre my curple,
Than ony ermine ever lap,
Or proud imperial purple.

Fareweel then, lang heal then,
And plenty be your fa',
May losses and crosses
Ne'er at your hallan ca'!

WILLIAM SMELLIE.

——————To Crochallan came,
The old cocked-hat, the gray surtout, the same;
His bristling beard just rising in its might;
'T was four long nights and days till shaving-night;
His uncombed grizzly locks, wild staring, thatched
A head for thought profound and clear unmatched;
Yet though his caustic wit was biting rude,
His heart was warm, benevolent, and good.

RATTLIN', ROARIN' WILLIE.

AS I cam by Crochallan,
I cannilie keekit ben;
Rattlin', roarin' Willie
Was sitting at yon boord-en';
Sitting at yon boord-en',
And amang gude companie;
Rattlin', roarin' Willie,
Ye 're welcome hame to me!

INSCRIPTION FOR THE GRAVE OF FERGUSSON.

HERE LIES ROBERT FERGUSSON, POET.

BORN, SEPTEMBER 5TH, 1751; DIED, 16TH OCTOBER, 1774.

NO sculptured marble here, nor pompous lay,
"No storied urn, nor animated bust;"
This simple stone directs pale Scotia's way
To pour her sorrows o'er her Poet's dust.

VERSES UNDER THE PORTRAIT OF FERGUSSON.

CURSE on ungrateful man, that can be pleased,
And yet can starve the author of the pleasure!
Oh thou, my elder brother in misfortune,
By far my elder brother in the Muses,
With tears I pity thy unhappy fate!
Why is the bard unpitied by the world,
Yet has so keen a relish of its pleasures?

VERSES INTENDED TO BE WRITTEN BELOW A NOBLE EARL'S PICTURE. [THE EARL OF GLENCAIRN.]

WHOSE is that noble, dauntless brow?
And whose that eye of fire?

And whose that generous princely mien
Even rooted foes admire?

Stranger, to justly shew that brow,
And mark that eye of fire,
Would take His hand, whose vernal tints
His other works admire.

Bright as a cloudless summer sun,
With stately port he moves;
His guardian seraph eyes with awe
The noble ward he loves.

Among the illustrious Scottish sons
That chief thou may'st discern;
Mark Scotia's fond returning eye,
It dwells upon Glencairn.

THE AMERICAN WAR.

A FRAGMENT.

WHEN Guildford good our pilot stood,
And did our helm thraw, man,
Ae night, at tea, began a plea,
Within America, man:
Then up they gat the maskin'-pat,
And in the sea did jaw, man;
And did nae less, in full Congréss,
Than quite refuse our law, man.

Then through the lakes Montgomery takes,
I wat he was na slaw, man;
Down Lowrie's Burn he took a turn,
And Carleton did ca', man;
But yet, what-reck, he, at Quebec,
Montgomery-like did fa', man,
Wi' sword in hand, before his band,
Amang his en'mies a', man.

Poor Tammy Gage, within a cage,
Was kept at Boston ha', man;
Till Willie Howe took o'er the knowe
For Philadelphia, man.
Wi' sword and gun he thought a sin
Guid Christian blood to draw, man:
But at New York, wi' knife and fork,
Sir-loin he hackèd sma', man.

Burgoyne gaed up, like spur and whip,
Till Fraser brave did fa', man;
Then lost his way, ae misty day,
In Saratoga shaw, man.
Cornwallis fought as lang 's he dought,
And did the buckskins claw, man;
But Clinton's glaive frae rust to save,
He hung it to the wa', man.

Then Montague, and Guildford too,
Began to fear a fa', man;
And Sackville dour, wha stood the stoure,
The German Chief to thraw, man:
For Paddy Burke, like ony Turk,
Nae mercy had at a', man;

And Charlie Fox threw by the box,
And lowsed his tinkler jaw, man.

Then Rockingham took up the game,
Till death did on him ca', man;
When Shelburne meek held up his cheek,
Conform to gospel law, man.
Saint Stephen's boys, wi' jarring noise,
They did his measures thraw, man,
For North and Fox united stocks,
And bore him to the wa', man.

Then clubs and hearts were Charlie's cartes,
He swept the stakes awa', man,
Till the diamond's ace, of Indian race,
Led him a sair *faux pas*, man.
The Saxon lads, wi' loud placads,
On Chatham's boy did ca', man;
And Scotland drew her pipe, and blew,
"Up, Willie, waur them a', man!"

Behind the throne then Grenville's gone,
A secret word or twa, man;
While slee Dundas aroused the class,
Be-north the Roman Wa', man:
And Chatham's wraith, in heavenly graith,
(Inspired bardies saw, man,)
Wi' kindling eyes cried: "Willie, rise!
Would I hae feared them a', man?"

But, word and blow, North, Fox, and Co.,
Gowff'd Willie like a ba', man,
Till Suthron raise, and coost their claise

Behind him in a raw, man;
And Caledon threw by the drone,
And did her whittle draw, man;
And swoor fu' rude, through dirt and blood,
To make it guid in law, man.

. . . . . .

TO A HAGGIS.

FAIR fa' your honest, sonsie face,
Great chieftain o' the puddin'-race:
Aboon them a' ye tak your place,
Painch, tripe, or thairm;
Weel are ye wordy of a grace
As lang 's my arm.

The groaning trencher there ye fill,
Your hurdies like a distant hill;
Your pin wad help to mend a mill
In time o' need,
While through your pores the dews distil
Like amber bead.

His knife see rustic labour dight,
And cut you up wi' ready slight,
Trenching your gushing entrails bright
Like ony ditch;
And then, oh what a glorious sight,
Warm-reekin', rich!

Then horn for horn they stretch and strive,
Deil tak the hindmost, on they drive,

Till a' their weel-swall'd kytes belyve
Are bent like drums;
Then auld guidman, maist like to rive,
"Bethankit!" hums.

Is there that owre his French ragout,
Or olio that wad staw a sow,
Or fricassee wad mak her spew
Wi' perfect scunner,
Looks down wi' sneering, scornfu' view
On sic a dinner!

Poor devil! see him owre his trash,
As feckless as a withered rash,
His spindle-shank a guid whip-lash,
His nieve a nit;
Through bloody flood or field to dash,
Oh how unfit!

But mark the rustic, haggis-fed,
The trembling earth resounds his tread,
Clap in his walie nieve a blade,
He'll mak it whissle;
And legs, and arms, and heads will sned,
Like taps o' thrissle.

Ye Powers wha mak mankind your care,
And dish them out their bill o' fare,
Auld Scotland wants nae skinking ware
That jaups in luggies;
But, if ye wish her gratefu' prayer,
Gie her a Haggis!

EXTEMPORE IN THE COURT OF SESSION.

TUNE — *Killiecrankie.*

LORD ADVOCATE.

HE clenched his pamphlets in his fist,
He quoted and he hinted,
Till in a declamation-mist,
His argument he tint it:
He gapèd for 't, he graipèd for 't,
He fand it was awa', man;
But what his common-sense came short,
He ekèd out wi' law, man.

MR. ERSKINE.

Collected Harry stood a wee,
Then opened out his arm, man;
His lordship sat wi' ruefu' e'e,
And eyed the gathering storm, man;
Like wind-driven hail, it did assail,
Or torrents owre a linn, man;
The Bench sae wise lift up their eyes,
Half-wauken'd wi' the din, man.

PROLOGUE SPOKEN BY MR. WOODS ON HIS BENEFIT-NIGHT.

WHEN by a generous Public's kind acclaim,
That dearest meed is granted — honest Fame;
When here your favour is the actor's lot,

Nor even the man in private life forgot;
What breast so dead to heavenly Virtue's glow,
But heaves impassioned with the grateful throe?

Poor is the task to please a barbarous throng,
It needs no Siddons' powers in Southern's song;
But here an ancient nation famed afar,
For genius, learning high, as great in war —
Hail, CALEDONIA, name for ever dear!
Before whose sons I 'm honoured to appear!
Where every science — every nobler art —
That can inform the mind, or mend the heart,
Is known; as grateful nations oft have found
Far as the rude barbarian marks the bound.
Philosophy, no idle pedant dream,
Here holds her search by heaven-taught Reason's beam;
Here History paints with elegance and force
The tide of Empire's fluctuating course;
Here Douglas forms wild Shakspeare into plan,
And Harley rouses all the god in man.
When well-formed taste and sparkling wit unite
With manly lore, or female beauty bright
(Beauty, where faultless symmetry and grace,
Can only charm us in the second place)
Witness my heart, how oft with panting fear,
As on this night, I 've met these judges here!
But still the hope Experience taught to live,
Equal to judge — you 're candid to forgive.
No hundred-headed Riot here we meet,
With Decency and Law beneath his feet;
Nor Insolence assumes fair Freedom's name;
Like CALEDONIANS, you applaud or blame.

Oh thou dread Power! whose empire-giving hand
Has oft been stretched to shield the honoured land!
Strong may she glow with all her ancient fire!
May every son be worthy of his sire!
Firm may she rise with generous disdain
At Tyranny's or direr Pleasure's chain!
Still self-dependent in her native shore,
Bold may she brave grim Danger's loudest roar,
Till Fate the curtain drops on worlds to be no more!

WILLIE 'S AWA'.

AULD chuckie Reekie 's sair distrest,
Down droops her ance weel-burnished crest,
Nae joy her bonny buskit nest
Can yield ava,
Her darling bird that she lo'es best —
Willie 's awa'!

Oh Willie was a witty wight,
And had o' things an unco slight;
Auld Reekie aye he keepit tight,
And trig and braw:
But now they 'll busk her like a fright —
Willie 's awa'!

The stiffest o' them a' he bowed;
The bauldest o' them a' he cowed;
They durst nae mair than he allowed,
That was a law:

We 've lost a birkie weel worth gowd —
Willie 's awa' !

Now gawkies, tawpies, gowks, and fools,
Frae colleges and boarding-schools,
May sprout like simmer puddock-stools
In glen or shaw ;
He wha could brush them down to mools —
Willie 's awa' !

The brethren o' the Commerce-Chaumer
May mourn their loss wi' doolfu' clamour ;
He was a dictionar and grammar
Amang them a' ;
I fear they 'll now mak monie a stammer —
Willie 's awa' !

Nae mair we see his levee door
Philosophers and poets pour,
And toothy critics by the score,
In bloody raw !
The adjutant o' a' the core —
Willie 's awa' !

Now worthy Gregory's Latin face,
Tytler's and Greenfield's modest grace,
Mackenzie, Stewart, sic a brace
As Rome ne'er saw ;
They a' maun meet some ither place —
Willie 's awa' !

Poor Burns e'en Scotch drink canna quicken ;
He cheeps like some bewildered chicken,

Scared frae its minnie and the cleckin'
By hoodie-craw ;
Grief's gien his heart an unco kickin' —
Willie 's awa' !

Now every sour-mou'd girnin' blellum —
And Calvin's folk, are fit to fell him ;
And self-conceited critic skellum
His quill may draw ;
He wha could brawlie ward their bellum —
Willie 's awa' !

Up wimpling stately Tweed I 've sped,
And Eden scenes on crystal Jed,
And Ettrick banks now roaring red,
While tempests blaw ;
But every joy and pleasure 's fled —
Willie 's awa' !

May I be Slander's common speech,
A text for infamy to preach,
And lastly, streekit out to bleach
In winter snaw,
When I forget thee, Willie Creech,
Though far awa' !

May never wicked Fortune touzle him !
May never wicked men bamboozle him !
Until a pow as auld 's Methusalem
He canty claw !
Then to the blessèd New Jerusalem
Fleet wing awa' !

ON INCIVILITY SHEWN HIM AT INVERARY.

WHOE'ER he be that sojourns here,
I pity much his case,
Unless he come to wait upon
The Lord their God — his Grace.

There 's naething here but Highland pride,
And Highland scab and hunger;
If Providence has sent me here,
'T was surely in an anger.

COMPOSED ON LEAVING A PLACE IN THE HIGHLANDS WHERE HE HAD BEEN KINDLY ENTERTAINED.

WHEN Death's dark stream I ferry o'er —
A time that surely shall come —
In Heaven itself I 'll ask no more,
Than just a Highland welcome!

ON READING IN A NEWSPAPER THE DEATH OF JOHN M'LEOD, Esq., BROTHER TO A YOUNG LADY, A PARTICULAR FRIEND OF THE AUTHOR'S.

SAD thy tale, thou idle page,
And rueful thy alarms:

Death tears the brother of her love
From Isabella's arms.

Sweetly decked with pearly dew
The morning rose may blow,
But cold successive noontide blasts
May lay its beauties low.

Fair on Isabella's morn
The sun propitious smiled,
But, long ere noon, succeeding clouds
Succeeding hopes beguiled.

Fate oft tears the bosom cords
That nature finest strung;
So Isabella's heart was formed,
And so that heart was wrung.

Were it in the poet's power,
Strong as he shares the grief
That pierces Isabella's heart,
To give that heart relief!

Dread Omnipotence alone
Can heal the wound he gave,
Can point the brimful grief-worn eyes
To scenes beyond the grave.

Virtue's blossoms there shall blow,
And fear no withering blast;
There Isabella's spotless worth
Shall happy be at last.

ON THE DEATH OF SIR JAMES HUNTER BLAIR.

THE lamp of day, with ill-presaging glare,
Dim, cloudy, sank beneath the western wave;
The inconstant blast howled through the darkening air,
And hollow whistled in the rocky cave.

Lone as I wandered by each cliff and dell,
Once the loved haunts of Scotia's royal train;
Or mused where limpid streams once hallowed well,
Or mouldering ruins mark the sacred fane;

The increasing blast roared round the beetling rocks,
The clouds, swift-winged, flew o'er the starry sky,
The groaning trees untimely shed their locks,
And shooting-meteors caught the startled eye.

The paly moon rose in the livid east,
And 'mong the cliffs disclosed a stately form,
In weeds of wo that frantic beat her breast,
And mixed her wailings with the raving storm.

Wild to my heart the filial pulses glow,
'T was Caledonia's trophied shield I viewed:
Her form majestic drooped in pensive wo,
The lightning of her eye in tears imbued.

Reversed that spear, redoubtable in war,
Reclined that banner, erst in fields unfurled,
That like a deathful meteor gleamed afar,
And braved the mighty monarchs of the world.

"My patriot son fills an untimely grave!"
With accents wild and lifted arms she cried:
"Low lies the hand that oft was stretched to save,
Low lies the heart that swelled with honest pride.

"A weeping country joins a widow's tear;
The helpless poor mix with the orphan's cry;
The drooping arts surround their patron's bier;
And grateful science heaves the heartfelt sigh!

"I saw my sons resume their ancient fire;
I saw fair Freedom's blossoms richly blow;
But ah! how hope is born but to expire!
Relentless fate has laid their guardian low.

"My patriot falls: but shall he lie unsung,
While empty greatness saves a worthless name?
No: every Muse shall join her tuneful tongue,
And future ages hear his growing fame.

"And I will join a mother's tender cares,
Through future times to make his virtue last;
That distant years may boast of other Blairs!"—
She said, and vanished with the sweeping blast.

TO MISS FERRIER,

ENCLOSING THE ELEGY ON SIR J. H. BLAIR.

NAE heathen name shall I prefix
Frae Pindus or Parnassus;
Auld Reekie dings them a' to sticks,
For rhyme-inspiring lasses.

Jove's tunefu' dochters three times three
Made Homer deep their debtor;
But, gien the body half an e'e,
Nine Ferriers wad done better!

Last day my mind was in a bog,
Down George's Street I stoited;
A creeping cauld prosaic fog
My very senses doited.

Do what I dought to set her free,
My saul lay in the mire;
Ye turned a neuk — I saw your e'e —
She took the wing like fire!

The mournfu' sang I here enclose
In gratitude I send you;
And [wish and] pray in rhyme sincere,
A' gude things may attend you!

VERSES

WRITTEN WITH A PENCIL OVER THE CHIMNEY-PIECE, IN THE PARLOUR OF THE INN AT KENMORE, TAYMOUTH.

ADMIRING Nature in her wildest grace,
These northern scenes with weary feet I trace;
O'er many a winding dale and painful steep,
The abodes of covied grouse and timid sheep,
My savage journey, curious, I pursue,
Till famed Breadálbane opens to my view.
The meeting cliffs each deep-sunk glen divides,
The woods, wild scattered, clothe their ample sides;
The outstretching lake, imbosomed 'mong the hills,
The eye with wonder and amazement fills;
The Tay, meandering sweet in infant pride,
The palace, rising on its verdant side;
The lawns, wood-fringed in Nature's native taste;
The hillocks, dropt in Nature's careless haste;
The arches, striding o'er the new-born stream;
The village, glittering in the noontide beam —

. . . . . .

Poetic ardours in my bosom swell,
Lone wandering by the hermit's mossy cell:
The sweeping theatre of hanging woods;
The incessant roar of headlong tumbling floods —

. . . . . .

Here Poesy might wake her Heaven-taught lyre,
And look through nature with creative fire;

Here to the wrongs of Fate half reconciled,
Misfortune's lightened steps might wander wild;
And Disappointment, in these lonely bounds,
Find balm to soothe her bitter, rankling wounds:
Here heart-struck Grief might heavenward stretch her scan,
And injured Worth forget and pardon man.

. . . . . .

THE BIRKS OF ABERFELDY.

TUNE — *The Birks of Abergeldy.*

CHORUS.

BONNY lassie, will ye go,
Will ye go, will ye go?
Bonny lassie, will ye go
To the birks of Aberfeldy?

Now simmer blinks on flowery braes,
And o'er the crystal streamlet plays;
Come, let us spend the lightsome days
In the birks of Aberfeldy.

The little birdies blithely sing,
While o'er their heads the hazels hing,
Or lightly flit on wanton wing
In the birks of Aberfeldy.

The braes ascend, like lofty wa's,
The foamy stream deep-roaring fa's,

O'erhung wi' fragrant spreading shaws,
The birks of Aberfeldy.

The hoary cliffs are crowned wi' flowers,
White o'er the linns the burnie pours,
And rising, weets wi' misty showers
The birks of Aberfeldy.

Let Fortune's gifts at random flee,
They ne'er shall draw a wish frae me,
Supremely blest wi' love and thee,
In the birks of Aberfeldy.

THE HUMBLE PETITION OF BRUAR WATER TO THE NOBLE DUKE OF ATHOLE.

MY lord, I know your noble ear
Wo ne'er assails in vain;
Emboldened thus, I beg you 'll hear
Your humble slave complain,
How saucy Phœbus' scorching beams,
In flaming summer-pride,
Dry-withering, waste my foamy streams,
And drink my crystal tide.

The lightly-jumpin' glowrin' trouts,
That through my waters play,
If, in their random, wanton spouts,
They near the margin stray;
If, hapless chance! they linger lang,
I 'm scorching up so shallow,

They 're left the whitening stanes amang,
In gasping death to wallow.

Last day I grat wi' spite and teen,
As Poet Burns came by,
That to a bard I should be seen
Wi' half my channel dry:
A panegyric rhyme, I ween,
Even as I was he shored me;
But had I in my glory been,
He, kneeling, wad adored me.

Here, foaming down the shelvy rocks,
In twisting strength I rin;
There, high my boiling torrent smokes,
Wild roaring o'er a linn:
Enjoying large each spring and well,
As Nature gave them me,
I am, although I say 't mysel',
Worth gaun a mile to see.

Would then my noble master please
To grant my highest wishes,
He 'll shade my banks wi' towering trees,
And bonny spreading bushes.
Delighted doubly then, my lord,
You 'll wander on my banks,
And listen monie a grateful bird
Return you tuneful thanks.

The sober laverock, warbling wild,
Shall to the skies aspire;
The gowdspink, Music's gayest child,

Shall sweetly join the choir:
The blackbird strong, the lintwhite clear,
The mavis mild and mellow,
The robin pensive autumn cheer,
In all her locks of yellow.

This, too, a covert shall insure
To shield them from the storm;
And coward maukin sleep secure,
Low in her grassy form.
Here shall the shepherd make his seat,
To weave his crown of flowers;
Or find a sheltering safe retreat
From prone descending showers.

And here, by sweet endearing stealth,
Shall meet the loving pair,
Despising worlds with all their wealth
As empty idle care.
The flowers shall vie in all their charms
The hour of heaven to grace,
And birks extend their fragrant arms
To screen the dear embrace.

Here haply too, at vernal dawn,
Some musing bard may stray,
And eye the smoking, dewy lawn,
And misty mountain gray;
Or by the reaper's nightly beam,
Mild-chequering through the trees,
Rave to my darkly dashing stream,
Hoarse swelling on the breeze.

Let lofty firs, and ashes cool,
My lowly banks o'erspread,
And view, deep bending in the pool,
Their shadows' watery bed!
Let fragrant birks in woodbines drest
My craggy cliffs adorn;
And, for the little songster's nest,
The close embowering thorn.

So may old Scotia's darling hope,
Your little angel band,
Spring, like their fathers, up to prop
Their honoured native land!
So may, through Albion's farthest ken,
To social-flowing glasses,
The grace be — "Athole's honest men,
And Athole's bonny lasses!"

VERSES

WRITTEN WHILE STANDING BY THE FALL OF FYERS NEAR LOCH NESS.

AMONG the heathy hills and ragged woods,
The foaming Fyers pours his mossy floods;
Till full he dashes on the rocky mounds,
Where, through a shapeless breach, his stream resounds.
As high in air the bursting torrents flow,
As deep recoiling surges foam below;
Prone down the rock the whitening sheet descends,
And viewless Echo's ear, astonished, rends.

Dim seen, through rising mists and ceaseless showers,
The hoary cavern wide surrounding, lowers;
Still through the gap the struggling river toils,
And still below, the horrid caldron boils —
. . . . . .

CASTLE-GORDON.

STREAMS that glide in Orient plains,
Never bound by Winter's chains;
Glowing here on golden sands,
There commixed with foulest stains,
From tyranny's empurpled bands;
These, their richly-gleaming waves,
I leave to tyrants and their slaves;
Give me the stream that sweetly laves
The banks by Castle-Gordon.

Spicy forests, ever gay,
Shading from the burning ray
Helpless wretches sold to toil,
Or the ruthless native's way,
Bent on slaughter, blood, and spoil;
Woods that ever verdant wave,
I leave the tyrant and the slave;
Give me the groves that lofty brave
The storms by Castle-Gordon.

Wildly here, without control,
Nature reigns and rules the whole;

In that sober, pensive mood,
Dearest to the feeling soul,
She plants the forest, pours the flood.
Life's poor day I 'll musing rave,
And find at night a sheltering cave,
Where waters flow and wild woods wave,
By bonny Castle-Gordon.

THE BONNY LASS OF ALBANY.

TUNE — *Mary's Dream.*

MY heart is wae, and unco wae,
To think upon the raging sea,
That roars between her gardens green
And the bonny Lass of Albany.

This lovely maid 's of royal blood
That rulèd Albion's kingdoms three,
But oh, alas ! for her bonny face,
They 've wranged the Lass of Albany.

In the rolling tide of spreading Clyde
There sits an isle of high degree,
And a town of fame whose princely name
Should grace the Lass of Albany.

But there 's a youth, a witless youth,
That fills the place where she should be ;
We 'll send him o'er to his native shore,
And bring our ain sweet Albany.

Alas the day, and wo the day,
A false usurper wan the gree,
Who now commands the towers and lands,
The royal right of Albany.

We 'll daily pray, we 'll nightly pray,
On bended knees most fervently,
The time may come, with pipe and drum,
We 'll welcome hame fair Albany.

ON SCARING SOME WATER-FOWL IN LOCH TURIT.

WHY, ye tenants of the lake,
For me your watery haunt forsake ?
Tell me, fellow-creatures, why
At my presence thus you fly ?
Why disturb your social joys,
Parent, filial, kindred ties ? —
Common friend to you and me,
Nature's gifts to all are free :
Peaceful keep your dimpling wave,
Busy feed, or wanton lave ;
Or, beneath the sheltering rock,
Bide the surging billow's shock.
Conscious, blushing for our race,
Soon, too soon, your fears I trace.
Man, your proud usurping foe,
Would be lord of all below :
Plumes himself in Freedom's pride,
Tyrant stern to all beside.

The eagle, from the cliffy brow,
Marking you his prey below,
In his breast no pity dwells,
Strong necessity compels:
But man, to whom alone is given
A ray direct from pitying Heaven,
Glories in his heart humane —
And creatures for his pleasure slain.
In these savage, liquid plains,
Only known to wandering swains,
Where the mossy riv'let strays,
Far from human haunts and ways,
All on Nature you depend,
And life's poor season peaceful spend.
Or, if man's superior might
Dare invade your native right,
On the lofty ether borne,
Man with all his powers you scorn;
Swiftly seek, on clanging wings,
Other lakes and other springs;
And the foe you cannot brave,
Scorn at least to be his slave.

BLITHE WAS SHE.

TUNE — *Andro and his Cutty Gun.*

CHORUS.

BLITHE, blithe and merry was she,
Blithe was she but and ben:
Blithe by the banks of Earn,
And blithe in Glenturit Glen.

By Auchtertyre grows the aik,
On Yarrow banks the birken shaw;
But Phemie was a bonnier lass
Than braes o' Yarrow ever saw.

Her looks were like a flower in May,
Her smile was like a simmer morn;
She trippèd by the banks o' Earn,
As light 's a bird upon a thorn.

Her bonny face it was as meek
As ony lamb upon a lea;
The evening sun was ne'er sae sweet
As was the blink o' Phemie's e'e.

The Highland hills I 've wandered wide,
And o'er the lowlands I hae been;
But Phemie was the blithest lass
That ever trod the dewy green.

THE ROSE-BUD.

TUNE — *The Shepherd's Wife.*

A ROSE-BUD by my early walk,
Adown a corn-enclosèd bawk,
Sae gently bent its thorny stalk,
All on a dewy morning.
Ere twice the shades o' dawn are fled,
In a' its crimson glory spread,
And drooping rich the dewy head,
It scents the early morning.

Within the bush, her covert nest,
A little linnet fondly prest,
The dew sat chilly on her breast
Sae early in the morning.
She soon shall see her tender brood,
The pride, the pleasure o' the wood,
Amang the fresh green leaves bedewed,
Awake the early morning.

So thou, dear bird, young Jenny fair!
On trembling string or vocal air,
Shall sweetly pay the tender care
That tents thy early morning.
So thou, sweet Rose-bud, young and gay,
Shalt beauteous blaze upon the day,
And bless the parent's evening ray
That watched thy early morning.

TO MISS CRUIKSHANK, A VERY YOUNG LADY.

WRITTEN ON THE BLANK-LEAF OF A BOOK PRESENTED TO HER BY THE AUTHOR.

BEAUTEOUS Rose-bud, young and gay,
Blooming in thy early May,
Never mayst thou, lovely flower,
Chilly shrink in sleety shower;
Never Boreas' hoary path,
Never Eurus' poisonous breath,
Never baleful stellar lights,
Taint thee with untimely blights!

Never, never reptile thief
Riot on thy virgin leaf,
Nor even Sol too fiercely view
Thy bosom blushing still with dew!

Mayst thou long, sweet crimson gem,
Richly deck thy native stem:
Till some evening, sober, calm,
Dropping dews and breathing balm,
While all around the woodland rings,
And every bird thy requiem sings,
Thou, amid the dirgeful sound,
Shed thy dying honours round,
And resign to parent earth
The loveliest form she e'er gave birth.

WHERE BRAVING ANGRY WINTER'S STORMS.

TUNE — *Neil Gow's Lamentation for Abercairny.*

WHERE, braving angry winter's storms,
The lofty Ochils rise,
Far in their shade my Peggy's charms
First blest my wondering eyes;
As one who by some savage stream
A lonely gem surveys,
Astonished, doubly marks its beam,
With art's most polished blaze.

Blest be the wild, sequestered shade,
And blest the day and hour,
Where Peggy's charms I first surveyed,

When first I felt their power!
The tyrant Death, with grim control,
May seize my fleeting breath;
But tearing Peggy from my soul
Must be a stronger death.

MY PEGGY'S FACE.

TUNE — *My Peggy's Face.*

MY Peggy's face, my Peggy's form,
The frost of hermit age might warm;
My Peggy's worth, my Peggy's mind,
Might charm the first of humankind.
I love my Peggy's angel air,
Her face so truly, heavenly fair,
Her native grace so void of art,
But I adore my Peggy's heart.

The lily's hue, the rose's dye,
The kindling lustre of an eye —
Who but owns their magic sway!
Who but knows they all decay!
The tender thrill, the pitying tear,
The generous purpose, nobly dear,
The gentle look, that rage disarms —
These are all immortal charms.

ADDRESS TO MR. WILLIAM TYTLER.

SENT WITH A SILHOUETTE PORTRAIT.

REVERED defender of beauteous Stuart,
Of Stuart, a name once respected —
A name which to love was the mark of a true heart,
But now 't is despised and neglected.

Though something like moisture conglobes in my eye,
Let no one misdeem me disloyal;
A poor friendless wanderer may well claim a sigh,
Still more, if that wanderer were royal.

My fathers that name have revered on a throne;
My fathers have fallen to right it;
Those fathers would spurn their degenerate son,
That name should he scoffingly slight it.

Still in prayers for King George I most heartily join,
The Queen, and the rest of the gentry;
Be they wise, be they foolish, is nothing of mine,
Their title 's avowed by my country.

But why of that epocha make such a fuss,
That gave us the Hanover stem?
If bringing them over was lucky for us,
I 'm sure 't was as lucky for them.

But loyalty — truce! we 're on dangerous ground!
Who knows how the fashions may alter?
The doctrine to-day that is loyalty sound,
To-morrow may bring us a halter!

I send you a trifle, a head of a bard,
A trifle scarce worthy your care;
But accept it, good sir, as a mark of regard,
Sincere as a saint's dying prayer.

Now life's chilly evening dim shades on your eye,
And ushers the long dreary night;
But you, like the star that athwart gilds the sky,
Your course to the latest is bright.

ON A YOUNG LADY

RESIDING ON THE BANKS OF THE SMALL RIVER DEVON, IN CLACKMANNANSHIRE, BUT WHOSE INFANT YEARS WERE SPENT IN AYRSHIRE.

HOW pleasant the banks of the clear winding Devon,
With green-spreading bushes, and flowers blooming fair!
But the bonniest flower on the banks of the Devon
Was once a sweet bud on the braes of the Ayr.

Mild be the sun on this sweet blushing flower,
In the gay rosy morn as it bathes in the dew,
And gentle the fall of the soft vernal shower,
That steals on the evening each leaf to renew!

Oh spare the dear blossom, ye orient breezes,
With chill hoary wing as ye usher the dawn!
And far be thou distant, thou reptile that seizes
The verdure and pride of the garden and lawn!

Let Bourbon exult in his gay-gilded lilies,
And England triumphant display her proud rose;
A fairer than either adorns the green valleys
Where Devon, sweet Devon, meandering flows.

ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF LORD PRESIDENT DUNDAS.

LONE on the bleaky hills the straying flocks
Shun the fierce storms among the sheltering rocks;
Down from the rivulets, red with dashing rains,
The gathering floods burst o'er the distant plains;
Beneath the blasts the leafless forests groan;
The hollow caves return a sullen moan.

Ye hills, ye plains, ye forests, and ye caves,
Ye howling winds, and wintry swelling waves,
Unheard, unseen, by human ear or eye,
Sad to your sympathetic scenes I fly;
Where to the whistling blast and water's roar
Pale Scotia's recent wound I may deplore.
Oh heavy loss, thy country ill could bear!
A loss these evil days can ne'er repair!

Justice, the high vicegerent of her God,
Her doubtful balance eyed, and swayed her rod;
Hearing the tidings of the fatal blow
She sank, abandoned to the wildest wo.

Wrongs, injuries, from many a darksome den,
Now gay in hope explore the paths of men:
See from his cavern grim Oppression rise,
And throw on Poverty his cruel eyes;
Keen on the helpless victim see him fly,
And stifle, dark, the feebly-bursting cry.

Mark ruffian Violence, distained with crimes,
Rousing elate in these degenerate times;
View unsuspecting Innocence a prey,
As guileful Fraud points out the erring way:
While subtle Litigation's pliant tongue
The life-blood equal sucks of Right and Wrong:
Hark, injured Want recounts th' unlistened tale,
And much-wronged Misery pours th' unpitied wail!

Ye dark waste hills, and brown unsightly plains,
To you I sing my grief-inspirèd strains:
Ye tempests, rage! ye turbid torrents, roll!
Ye suit the joyless tenor of my soul.
Life's social haunts and pleasures I resign,
Be nameless wilds and lonely wanderings mine,
To mourn the woes my country must endure,
That wound degenerate ages cannot cure.

A FAREWELL TO CLARINDA,

ON LEAVING EDINBURGH.

CLARINDA, mistress of my soul,
The measured time is run!
The wretch beneath the dreary pole
So marks his latest sun.

To what dark cave of frozen night
Shall poor Sylvander hie,
Deprived of thee, his life and light,
The sun of all his joy?

We part — but, by these precious drops
That fill thy lovely eyes!
No other light shall guide my steps
Till thy bright beams arise.

She, the fair sun of all her sex,
Has blest my glorious day;
And shall a glimmering planet fix
My worship to its ray?

CONTRIBUTIONS

TO THE SECOND VOLUME OF JOHNSON'S MUSEUM.

WHISTLE AND I'LL COME TO YE, MY LAD.

OH whistle and I'll come to ye, my lad,
Oh whistle and I'll come to ye, my lad;
Though father and mother and a' should gae mad,
Oh whistle and I'll come to ye, my lad.

Come down the back stairs when ye come to court me,
Come down the back stairs when ye come to court me,
Come down the back stairs, and let naebody see;
And come as ye were na coming to me.

MACPHERSON'S FAREWELL.

TUNE — *M'Pherson's Rant.*

FAREWELL, ye dungeons dark and strong,
The wretch's destinie!
Macpherson's time will not be long
On yonder gallows-tree.

Sae rantingly, sae wantonly,
Sae dauntingly gaed he;
He played a spring, and danced it round,
Below the gallows-tree.

Oh, what is Death but parting breath?
On many a bloody plain
I've dared his face, and in this place
I scorn him yet again!

Untie these bands from off my hands,
And bring to me my sword;
And there's no a man in all Scotland
But I'll brave him at a word.

I've lived a life of sturt and strife;
I die by treacherie:
It burns my heart I must depart,
And not avenged be.

Now farewell light, thou sunshine bright,
And all beneath the sky!
May coward shame distain his name,
The wretch that dares not die!

STAY, MY CHARMER.

TUNE — *An Gille dubh ciar dhubh.*

STAY, my charmer, can you leave me?
Cruel, cruel to deceive me!
Well you know how much you grieve me;

Cruel charmer, can you go?
Cruel charmer, can you go?

By my love so ill requited,
By the faith you fondly plighted,
By the pangs of lovers slighted,
Do not, do not leave me so!
Do not, do not leave me so!

STRATHALLAN'S LAMENT.

THICKEST night, o'erhang my dwelling!
Howling tempests, o'er me rave!
Turbid torrents, wintry swelling,
Still surround my lonely cave![1]

Crystal streamlets gently flowing,
Busy haunts of base mankind,
Western breezes softly blowing,
Suit not my distracted mind.

In the cause of right engagèd,
Wrongs injurious to redress,
Honour's war we strongly wagèd,
But the heavens denied success.

1 Variation in MS. in possession of Mr. B. Nightingale, Priory Road, London: —

"Thickest night, surround my dwelling!
Howling tempests, o'er me rave!
Turbid torrents, wintry swelling,
Roaring by my lonely cave!"

Ruin's wheel has driven o'er us,
Not a hope that dare attend:
The wide world is all before us —
But a world without a friend!

THE YOUNG HIGHLAND ROVER.

TUNE — *Morag.*

LOUD blaw the frosty breezes,
The snaws the mountains cover;
Like winter on me seizes,
Since my young Highland Rover
Far wanders nations over.
Where'er he go, where'er he stray,
May Heaven be his warden,
Return him safe to fair Strathspey,
And bonny Castle-Gordon!

The trees now naked groaning,
Soon shall wi' leaves be hinging,
The birdies dowie moaning,
Shall a' be blithely singing,
And every flower be springing.
Sae I 'll rejoice the lee-lang day,
When by his mighty warden
My youth 's returned to fair Strathspey,
And bonny Castle-Gordon.

RAVING WINDS AROUND HER BLOWING.

TUNE — *Macgregor of Ruara's Lament.*

RAVING winds around her blowing,
Yellow leaves the woodlands strowing,
By a river hoarsely roaring,
Isabella strayed deploring:
"Farewell hours that late did measure
Sunshine days of joy and pleasure;
Hail, thou gloomy night of sorrow,
Cheerless night that knows no morrow!

"O'er the past too fondly wandering,
On the hopeless future pondering,
Chilly Grief my life-blood freezes,
Fell Despair my fancy seizes.
Life, thou soul of every blessing,
Load to Misery most distressing,
Gladly how would I resign thee,
And to dark oblivion join thee!"

MUSING ON THE ROARING OCEAN.

TUNE — *Druimion Dubh.*

MUSING on the roaring ocean,
Which divides my love and me,
Wearying Heaven in warm devotion,
For his weal where'er he be;

Hope and Fear's alternate billow
Yielding late to Nature's law,

Whisp'ring spirits round my pillow
Talk of him that 's far awa'.

Ye whom sorrow never wounded,
Ye who never shed a tear,
Care-untroubled, joy-surrounded,
Gaudy Day to you is dear.

Gentle Night, do thou befriend me,
Downy Sleep, the curtain draw;
Spirits kind, again attend me,
Talk of him that 's far awa'!

BONNY PEGGY ALISON.

TUNE — *Braes o' Balquhidder.*

CHORUS.

I 'LL kiss thee yet, yet,
And I 'll kiss thee o'er again,
And I 'll kiss thee yet, yet,
My bonny Peggy Alison!

Ilk care and fear, when thou art near,
I ever mair defy them, O!
Young kings upon their hansel throne
Are no sae blest as I am. O!

When in my arms, wi' a' thy charms,
I clasp my countless treasure, O,

I seek nae mair o' heaven to share
  Than sic a moment's pleasure, O!

And by thy e'en, sae bonny blue,
  I swear I 'm thine for ever, O!
And on thy lips I seal my vow,
  And break it shall I never, O!

TO CLARINDA,

WITH A PRESENT OF A PAIR OF DRINKING-GLASSES.

FAIR Empress of the Poet's soul,
  And Queen of Poetesses,
Clarinda, take this little boon,
  This humble pair of glasses.

And fill them high with generous juice,
  As generous as your mind,
And pledge me in the generous toast —
  "The whole of humankind!"

"To those who love us!" — second fill;
  But not to those whom we love;
Lest we love those who love not us!
  A third — "To thee and me, love!"

THE CHEVALIER'S LAMENT.

TUNE — *Captain O'Kean.*

THE small birds rejoice in the green leaves returning,
The murmuring streamlet winds clear through the vale;
The hawthorn-trees blow in the dew of the morning,
And wild scattered cowslips bedeck the green dale:
But what can give pleasure, or what can seem fair,
While the lingering moments are numbered by care?
No flowers gaily springing, nor birds sweetly singing,
Can soothe the sad bosom of joyless despair.

The deed that I dared, could it merit their malice,
A king and a father to place on his throne?
His right are these hills, and his right are these valleys,
Where the wild beasts find shelter, but I can find none.
But 't is not my sufferings thus wretched, forlorn;
My brave gallant friends! 't is your ruin I mourn;
Your deeds proved so loyal in hot bloody trial —
Alas! I can make you no sweeter return!

EPISTLE TO HUGH PARKER.

IN this strange land, this uncouth clime,
A land unknown to prose or rhyme ;
Where words ne'er crost the Muse's heckles,
Nor limpet in poetic shackles ;
A land that Prose did never view it,
Except when drunk he stacher't through it,
Here, ambush'd by the chimla cheek,
Hid in an atmosphere of reek,
I hear a wheel thrum i' the neuk,
I hear it — for in vain I leuk.
The red peat gleams, a fiery kernel,
Enhusked by a fog infernal :
Here, for my wonted rhyming raptures,
I sit and count my sins by chapters.
For life and spunk like ither Christians,
I 'm dwindled down to mere existence ;
Wi' nae converse but Gallowa' bodies,
Wi' nae kenn'd face but Jenny Geddes.
Jenny, my Pegasean pride !
Dowie she saunters down Nithside,
And aye a westlin leuk she throws,
While tears hap o'er her auld brown nose
Was it for this, wi' canny care,
Thou bure the Bard through many a shire ?
At howes or hillocks never stumbled,
And late or early never grumbled ?
Oh, had I power like inclination,
I 'd heeze thee up a constellation,
To canter with the Sagitarre,
Or loup the ecliptic like a bar ;

Or turn the pole like any arrow;
Or, when auld Phœbus bids good-morrow,
Down the zodiac urge the race,
And cast dirt on his godship's face:
For I could lay my bread and kail
He 'd ne'er cast saut upo' thy tail.
Wi' a' this care and a' this grief,
And sma', sma' prospect of relief,
And nought but peat-reek i' my head,
How can I write what ye can read?
Torbolton, twenty-fourth o' June,
Ye 'll find me in a better tune;
But till we meet and weet our whistle,
Tak this excuse for nae epistle.

I LOVE MY JEAN.

TUNE—*Miss Admiral Gordon's Strathspey.*

OF a' the airts the wind can blaw,
I dearly like the west,
For there the bonny lassie lives,
The lassie I lo'e best:

There 's wild woods grow, and rivers row,
And monie a hill between;[1]

[1] The commencement of this stanza is given in Johnson's *Museum*—

"There wild woods grow," etc.,

But day and night my fancy's flight
Is ever wi' my Jean.

I see her in the dewy flowers,
I see her sweet and fair;
I hear her in the tunefu' birds,
I hear her charm the air:

There 's not a bonny flower that springs
By fountain, shaw, or green,
There 's not a bonny bird that sings,
But minds me o' my Jean.[1]

as implying the nature of the scenery in the west. In Wood's *Songs of Scotland*, the reading is —

"Though wild woods grow, and rivers row,
Wi' monie a hill between,
Baith day and night," etc.,

evidently an alteration designed to improve the logic of the verse. It appears that both readings are wrong, for in the original manuscript of Burns's contributions to Johnson, in the possession of Archibald Hastie, Esq., the line is written: "There 's wild woods grow," etc., as in our text. Another example will serve to bring this peculiarity of composition more distinctly before the mind of the reader:

By Auchtertyre grows the aik,
On Yarrow banks the birken shaw;
But Phemie was a bonnier lass
Than braes o' Yarrow ever saw.

I have been reminded that the idea is not new in verse:

"ἐπεὶ μάλα πολλὰ μεταξὺ
Οὔρεά τε σκιόεντα, θάλασσά τε ἠχήεσσα."
Iliad, i. 156.

1 The first of these stanzas appeared in the third volume of Johnson's *Museum*. Burns's note upon it afterwards was: "This song I composed out of compliment to Mrs. Burns. *N. B.* — It was in the honeymoon." Two additional stanzas were some years afterwards produced by John Hamilton, music-seller in Edinburgh:

O blaw, ye westlin' winds, blaw saft,
Amang the leafy trees,

Wi' balmy gale, frae hill and dale
Bring hame the laden bees;
And bring the lassie back to me
That 's aye sae neat and clean;
Ae smile o' her wad banish care,
Sae charming is my Jean.

What sighs and vows amang the knowes
Hae passed atween us twa!
How fond to meet, how wae to part,
That night she gaed awa'!
The powers aboon can only ken,
To whom the heart is seen,
That nane can be sae dear to me
As my sweet lovely Jean.

APPENDIX.

ADDITIONAL STANZAS OF "THE VISION."

IN a letter to Mrs. Dunlop, of January 15, 1787, Burns speaks of certain stanzas of *The Vision* which he had omitted from the printed copy. A manuscript of ten leaves, in Burns's handwriting, has been preserved, which contains *The Vision* unabridged, as it stood in 1786 — *The Gloomy Night is Gathering Fast* — *The Lass of Ballochmyle* — *My Nannie, O* — *Handsome Nell* — *Song in the Character of a Ruined Farmer* — *Song, Though Cruel Fate should bid us Part* — and *Misgivings of Despondency on the Approach of the Gloomy Monarch of the Grave;* all of them being poems which did not appear in the first edition, but most of which were inserted in the Edinburgh, or second edition. From allusions, the MS. was undoubtedly written after July, 1786, and before the Edinburgh edition came out. By the liberality of Mr. Dick, bookseller, Ayr, present proprietor of the MS., we are enabled to present such portions of its contents as have not seen the light.

After 18th stanza of printed copies:

With secret throes I marked that earth,
That cottage, witness of my birth;
And near I saw, bold issuing forth
In youthful pride,
A Lindsay, race of noble worth,
Famed far and wide.

Where, hid behind a spreading wood,
An ancient Pict-built mansion stood,
I spied, among an angel brood,
A female pair;

Sweet shone their high maternal blood,
And father's air.

An ancient tower to memory brought
How Dettingen's bold hero fought;
Still far from sinking into nought,
It owns a lord
Who "far in western" climates fought,
With trusty sword.

There, where a sceptred Pictish shade
Stalked round his ashes lowly laid,
I saw a martial race portrayed
In colours strong;
Bold, sodger-featured, undismayed,
They stalked along.

Among the rest I well could spy
One gallant, graceful, martial boy,
The sodger sparkled in his eye,
A diamond water;
I blest that noble badge with joy
That owned me *frater*.

After the 20th stanza:

Near by arose a mansion fine,
The seat of many a muse divine;
Not rustic muses such as mine,
With holly crowned,
But th' ancient, tuneful, laurelled Nine,
From classic ground.

I mourned the card that Fortune dealt,
To see where bonny Whitefoords dwelt;
But other prospects made me melt,
That village near;
There Nature, Friendship, Love I felt,
Fond-mingling dear.

Hail! Nature's pang, more strong than death!
Warm friendship's glow, like kindling wrath!
Love, dearer than the parting breath
Of dying friend!
"Not even" with life's wild devious path,
Your force shall end!

The power that gave the soft alarms,
In blooming Whitefoord's rosy charms,
Still threats the tiny-feathered arms,
The barbèd dart,
While lovely Wilhelmina warms
The coldest heart.

After the 21st:

Where Lugar leaves his moorland plaid,
Where lately Want was idly laid,
I markèd busy, bustling Trade,
In fervid flame,
Beneath a patroness's aid,
Of noble name;

While countless hills I could survey,
And countless flocks as well as they;
But other scenes did charms display,
That better please,
Where polished manners dwelt with Gray
In rural ease.

Where Cessnock pours with gurgling sound,
And Irwine, marking out the bound,
Enamoured of the scenes around,
Slow runs his race,
A name I doubly honoured found,
With knightly grace.

Brydone's brave ward, I saw him stand,
Fame humbly offering her hand;
And near his kinsman's rustic band,
With one accord,
Lamenting their late blessed land
Must change its lord.

The owner of a pleasant spot,
Near sandy wilds I did him note;
A heart too warm, a pulse too hot,
At times o'erran;
But large in every feature wrote,
Appeared the man.

SONG,

IN THE CHARACTER OF A RUINED FARMER.

TUNE — *Go from my window, Love, do.*

THE sun he is sunk in the west,
All creatures retirèd to rest,
While here I sit all sore beset
With sorrow, grief, and wo;
And it 's O, fickle Fortune, O!

The prosperous man is asleep,
Nor hears how the whirlwinds sweep;
But Misery and I must watch
The surly tempest blow:
And it 's O, fickle Fortune, O!

There lies the dear partner of my breast,
Her cares for a moment at rest:
Must I see thee, my youthful pride,
Thus brought so very low!
And it 's O, fickle Fortune, O!

There lie my sweet babies in her arms,
No anxious fear their little heart alarms;
But for their sake my heart doth ache,
With many a bitter throe:
And it 's O, fickle Fortune, O!

I once was by Fortune carest,
I once could relieve the distrest:
Now, life's poor support hardly earned,
My fate will scarce bestow:
And it 's O, fickle Fortune, O!

No comfort, no comfort I have!
How welcome to me were the grave!
But then my wife and children dear,
O whither would they go?
And it 's O, fickle Fortune, O!

O whither, O whither shall I turn!
All friendless, forsaken, forlorn!
For in this world Rest or Peace
I never more shall know!
And it 's O, fickle Fortune, O!

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